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SPLINTER CELL DEAD SPACE 3

PLAY



ISSUE NO 220
NEXT-GEN STARTS NOW

EXPLOSIVE EXCLUSIVE

BEYOND
THE NEW HEAVY RAIN
David Cage: "You'll forget it's a game"

MODERN WARFARE 4 SIGHTED
NEXT-GEN ASSASSIN'S CREED
'SONY REPEATING MISTAKES'

**THE SHOCKING
DEMANDS FOR**

PlayStation 4

RESIDENT EVIL 6
"FEAR IS
ESSENTIAL"

Creator spills bloody secrets of classic series

**151 TROPHIES IN
24 HOURS**

Supercharge your Trophy level in one day

OVER 800 REVIEWS INSIDE:
SPEC OPS: THE LINE SBK GENERATIONS INVERSION
GAME OF THRONES DOCTOR WHO PIXELJUNK 4AM

RIP UNCHARTED

**THE LAST
OF US**

Inside PS3's most
violent game

MUST READ
**29 HUGE
PREVIEWS**
EVERY ESSENTIAL PS3
TITLE INSIDE

ISSUE 220 £4.99 **NOW Gamer**



FROM THE DIRECTOR OF READ OR DIE AND THE STUDIO BEHIND
BLUE EXORCIST, FAIRY TAIL AND BLACK BUTLER

Welcome to THE SPACE SHOW

宇宙ショー人よラこそ



**"A GORGEOUS
SPECTACLE OF
A MOVIE"**

ANIME NEWS NETWORK

**"ONE PART
GHIBLI AND ONE
PART GEEKY!"**

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Welcome **PLAY**

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made just for you?

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Series creator lets us
in on all the secrets

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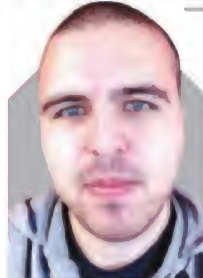
PLAYSTATION 4

Top developers on what
they want from Sony's
next-gen console

THE NEXT BIG GAME? WATCH DOGS

WHY UBISOFT'S LATEST
WILL SHOCK YOU
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Next-gen now?



You may have been one of the few who stayed up until stupid o'clock to watch Sony's E3 conference.

You may have whooped at *Beyond: Two Souls*, covered at *The Last Of Us*, frothed at the mouth with anger over Wonderbook. Or was that just us? Oh dear.

But there was a distinct feeling at E3 of a company holding the fort. PlayStation 3 can't live forever. We know it can't. So what happens when PlayStation 4 arrives? We spoke to top developers to find out what they want from the next generation of consoles. The answers may surprise you. They may not...

But hey! What about now? Today? Tomorrow? Even if the games this month have let us down, there's plenty to look forward to in the future, as we get to lift the lid on new announcements like *Watch Dogs* and *Splinter Cell Blacklist*, and bring you the latest on other upcoming big hitters like *The Last Of Us*, *Assassin's Creed III*, *God Of War: Ascension*, *Resident Evil 6*...

Okay, I'm just listing games now; I'll stop. You get the point. You should definitely check out the interview with David Cage in the *Beyond: Two Souls* stuff, for a mixture of the intriguing and the pretentious.

Whether it's games now or games later, PS3 or PS4, grabbing Trophies or downloading classics, playing slumped on the sofa or on the move, we've got you covered.

Enjoy the issue.

Rking

Editor

Get in touch!

Let us entertain you during our downtime at work



Facebook

You can find us avoiding work at [facebook.com/PlayMagUK](https://www.facebook.com/PlayMagUK). Shhhh!



YouTube

Lots of trailers and funny stuff I've made at [youtube.com/PlayMagUK](https://www.youtube.com/PlayMagUK)



Play blog

Home of our blogs and opinions. Check in at play-mag.co.uk



Twitter

Giveaways and insane rambling at twitter.com/PlayMag_UK

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WATCH DOGS

Ubisoft's new dog has plenty of old tricks up its sleeve, as we tear the game wide open

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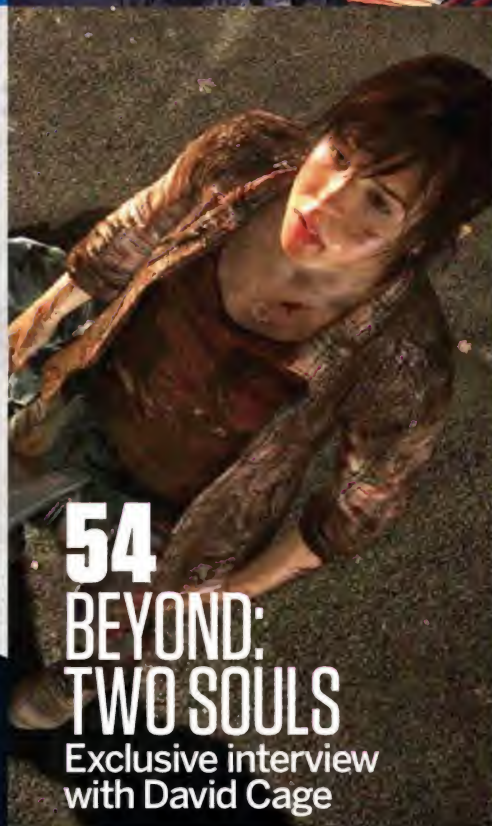
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Just read the Ni No Kuni preview again.

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Like Sonic Generations but not as good.

79 Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown PSN

If you don't buy this, we will fight you.

79 PixelJunk 4AM PSN

Big fish, little fish, cardboard box.

80 Inversion PS3

Konami's gravity-twister loses direction.

81 Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock PS3

Glitchy, dull and not much fun. No point reading the review now, really.

81 Mad Riders PSN

Also known as Mildly Eccentric Racing.

81 Harley Quinn's Revenge DLC

Short, uninspiring, disappointing.

81 Wonder Boy In Monster Land PSN

Perfect port, but will new players like it?



EXCLUSIVE ON YOUR DISC



BLACK OPS II SECRETS

If you dissect the trailer into tiny slices and analyse them, you can nab all sorts of secrets and info. Oh hey, guess what we did this month.

E3 TRAILER SPECIAL

Beyond, The Last Of Us, Dead Space 3, Dishonored, South Park: The Stick Of Truth, Far Cry 3, Watch Dogs, XCOM, Borderlands 2...



VIDEO GUIDES

We have a video walkthrough to nailing the perfect kill in Sniper Elite V2 with the naughty bits censored, and also nabbing golden weapons in Max Payne 3!

THE BEST GAMES OF 2012

Our extensive guide to what games will stand out over the rest of the year, as the traditional Christmas clash looms into view...



SEE THE BACK PAGE FOR MORE!

Play

THERE'S
NO ONE BETTER
POSITIONED TO TALK ABOUT
NEXT GEN THAN THOSE IN CHARGE
OF THE GAMES THEMSELVES, SO WE
ASKED THEM EXACTLY WHAT THEY
WANT FROM PLAYSTATION 4.
HERE ARE THEIR
ANSWERS...





Station 4

WHAT THE INDUSTRY DEMANDS

PlayStation 4 is here! Well, no it's not. The headlines were quickly cancelled and rewritten following E3, when some swore blind that Kaz Hirai would proudly hold Sony's next-gen console aloft for all to see. As it was, the only contribution from King Kaz was to stand up and gesture when Jack Tretton said, "I love you, man!" on stage and later, to shrink in his seat when Wonderbook showed up. Regardless, there's no stopping the inevitable charge of progress,

WHEN PS4 IS EXPECTED

and PlayStation 4 will be with us eventually. There's no telling how much further the PlayStation 3 can be cajoled into further age-defying visual feats courtesy of modern day sorcerers like those working at Naughty Dog and Quantic Dream, but the general feeling around the industry is that we're currently witnessing the final stage of PlayStation 3's incredible journey.

So what's next? Over the past few months, we've made a point of asking every developer we've spoken to about next gen. But not necessarily

WHAT YOU WANT FROM PS4

what they expect. Rather, what they want. They're the ones who will be determining what games you'll be playing. They're the ones who will be reaching under the hood to find the 'MAKE GRAPHICS GOOD' and 'REAL-TIME DYNAMIC BUMP-MAPPING LIGHTING' levers to pull. They're the ones who shape PlayStation's future, as they have done with its past.

The answers? Surprisingly varied. It would be easier to say "more power" or "better graphics" and leave it at that, but there's a real sense of developers wanting something to

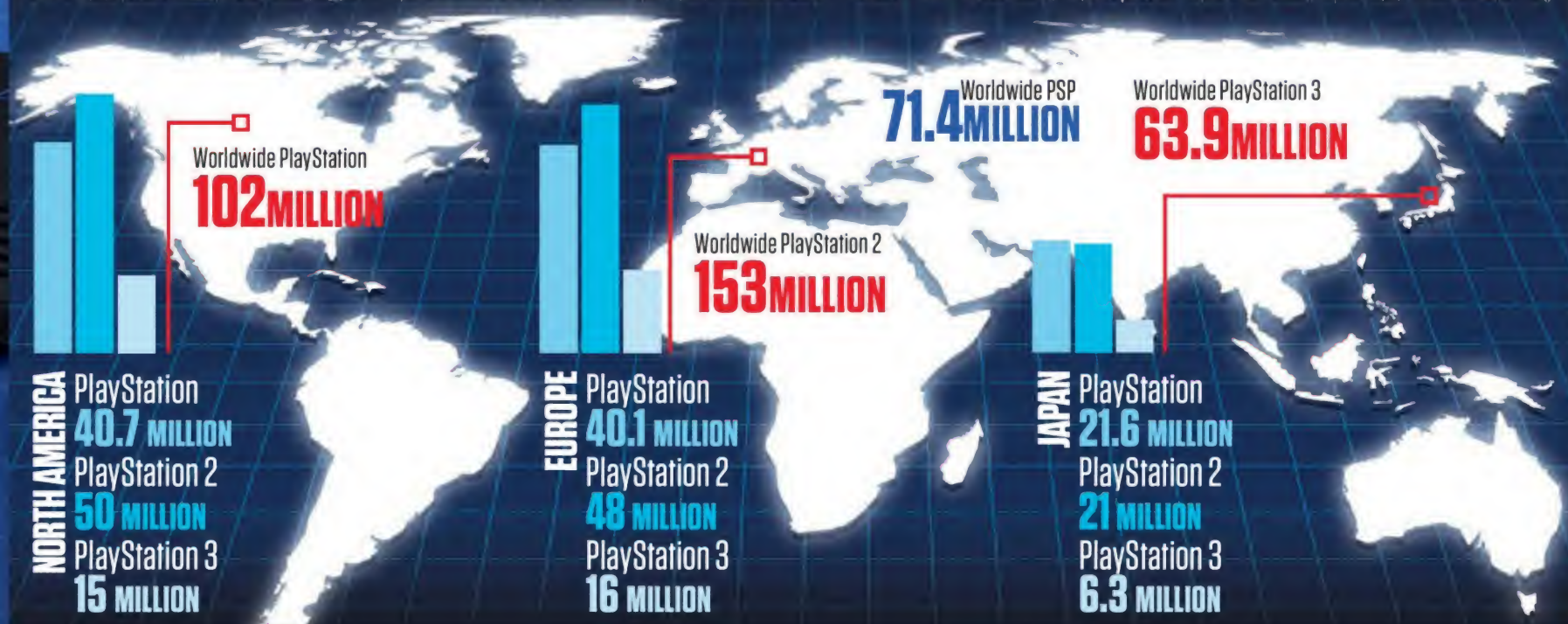
WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO PS VITA

change. There are only so many times we can see the same sort of games being trotted out before players get bored. But how do we work our way around that?

The most interesting card up Sony's sleeve is currently its most underplayed – the Vita. Developers want an alternative control scheme. Rivals Microsoft and Nintendo are pushing touch-screen controls. Sony is pushing PS Vita as an alternative control scheme for *LittleBigPlanet 2*. Is this the future? Is it the biggest clue on what PS4 holds?

THE FIRST PS4 GAMES

LEGACY OF THE PLAYSTATION



THE INDUSTRY DEMANDS AND WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT

ACTIVISION WANTS

TRUE AI

“ At the moment, developers have hit the limits of what the current generation of hardware is capable of in terms of data capacity, memory, processing power and streaming speed from the media. As a former artist myself, I am not really waiting for that extra blade of grass to make the world more visually stunning.

For the next gen, I'm personally looking forward to the increased processing power and what this will allow people to achieve with in-game AI-driven decision-making. The next set of hardware is shaping up to be a major leap forward in terms of the power of the consoles. There will definitely be some impressive titles at launch, but I'm really looking forward to that second round of IPs that will be released once the studios have become experts on the new hardware.

My hope is that we will finally be able to integrate truly learning AI that will provide not only adaptive encounters for the player, but also a well-balanced experience that is fun to play for gamers of any skill level. Unfortunately, AI-driven 'non-deterministic' gameplay is notoriously difficult to script and still tell a compelling story. In the end, it will be an awesome experience to see how things unfold in the next few years. ”

BRANT NICHOLAS Executive producer, *The Amazing Spider-Man*



“ It would be interesting at some point during a game like this to have more interactivity possible ”

SQUARE ENIX WANTS

CONTROLS REVAMP

“ I think there's two things, probably. First one being console games have become more immersive, certainly with triple-A titles, and I think the ability to tell stories that are better through greater processing power and greater graphical capability, I'm sure that is going to be an aspect of what these consoles bring. As a fan of triple-A experiences myself and a developer of those, I think we're all looking forward at United Front to that. I think the other aspect of it, which is more of a personal wish list thing, is if there's some capability or potential to take the physicality into games more. It's going to be hard to beat the standard controller for a game like *Sleeping Dogs* where you're going to be playing it for a very long time, but it would be interesting at some point during a game like this to have more interactivity possible – more physical interactivity. So maybe down the road some more integration of things like Kinect or Move. We'll have to see what comes down the pipe, but that would make something interesting, at least for segments of future triple-A games. ”

JEFF O'CONNELL SENIOR PRODUCER, *SLEEPING DOGS*





TECMO KOEI WANTS TO

BLOW PEOPLE AWAY

“ I think power is the obvious answer. But it's more than just that – it's not all about just having great-looking games, just great graphics. You need more; you need features that can actually enhance videogames and gaming experiences. We really want something that will blow people away, something that lets us really create games that offer players experiences that they can't get from what developers are producing right now. ”

YOSUKE HAYASHI PRODUCER, NINJA GAIDEN 3



SONY SANTA MONICA WANTS

GLOVE CONTROLLER

“ I prefer joystick and buttons versus Move and Kinect. I think it will all go touch screen. Check out [Samsung's TV from CES] – very cool tech. If we go with some glove controller – more *Minority Report*, not Power Glove – I would prefer something with better response time. ”

TODD PAPY DIRECTOR, GOD OF WAR: ASCENSION





BOSSA STUDIOS WANTS

SONY TO GET THE MESSAGE

“ If you look at a controller like DualShock or the Xbox 360 controller, anyone who has not grown up using these gamepads is completely unable to use them. The complexity level of the games being produced by these platforms up to three or four years ago is astonishingly high. The industry realised this through the Wii, and Nintendo did a great job opening consoles up to a wider audience. Of course, Microsoft and Sony had their own solutions with Kinect and all the music-based games like *SingStar*, which are very accessible.

If the specs from the 3DS and Vita are anything to go by, my take on this is they haven't quite got it yet. Although the 3DS is far more accessible, far simpler and more suited for entry-level players, the Vita feels to me like a very hardcore platform. So it doesn't feel like they've got the message yet. The fact is that they're still strangers to social networks, although consoles have made small steps to integrating with these platforms.

While I think nothing prevents them from embracing these platforms apart from political reasons and who owns the player and all those business considerations, if you take all these things out of consideration and look at what's left for the player himself, the best for the player would be, 'I want to connect with all my friends and I want them to play the same thing that I do so that we can play together.' Those kind of things didn't click with Sony and Microsoft, as far as I can tell.

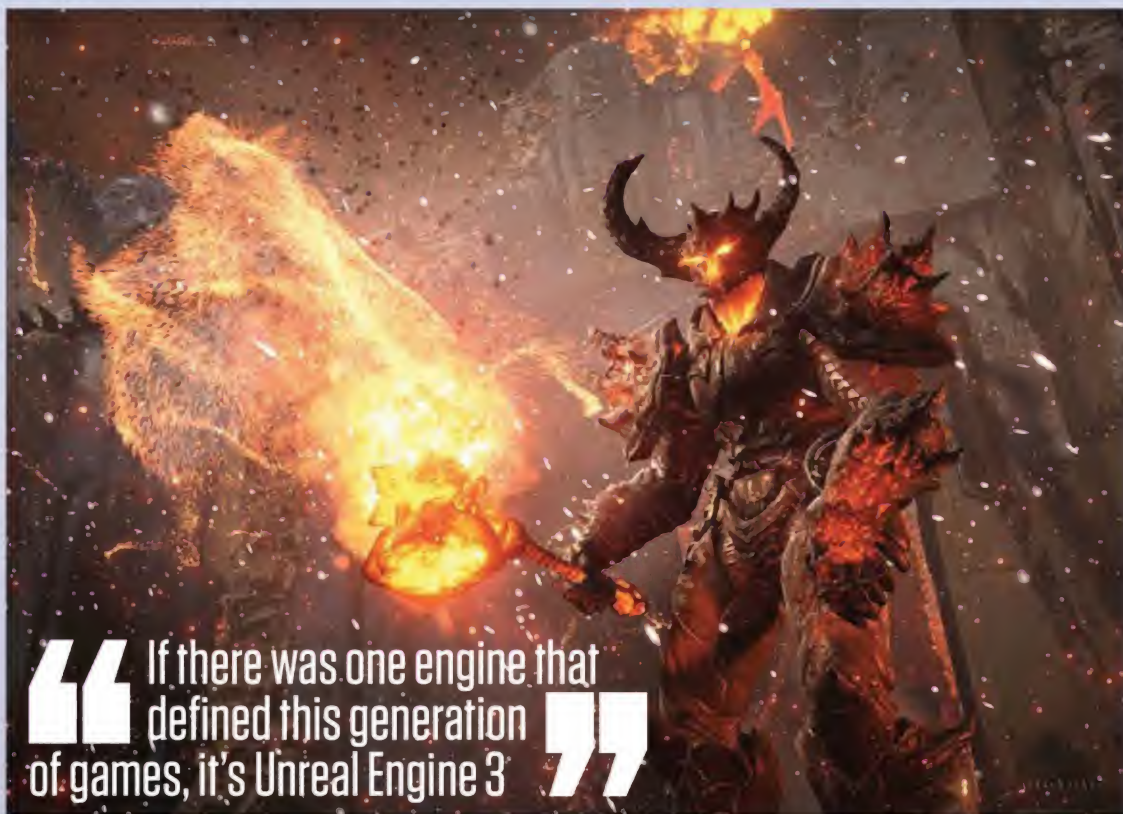
HENRIQUE OLIFIERS CO-FOUNDER



EPIC GAMES WANTS

UNBELIEVABLE GRAPHICS

This year alone, it's used in *Asura's Wrath*, *Borderlands 2*, *Dishonored*, *Dust 514*, *Game Of Thrones*, *Lollipop Chainsaw*, *Mass Effect 3*, *Silent Hill: Downpour*, *Spec Ops: The Line*, *Transformers: Fall Of Cybertron* and *XCOM: Enemy Unknown*. So the timing of Unreal Engine 4's public unveiling should be noted. We have no doubt that Epic will have already licensed the engine to trusted partners and early adopters, but the public unveiling lets everyone see what it can do, a year before we'll apparently see next-gen technology. Could this be the same time that Sony is showing off next-gen specs to developers? Interesting to think about. Also note how the public demo shows dark caves, flowing lava, Daedric armour and snowy mountains, almost as though it's showing what *Skyrim* would look like running on Unreal Engine 4...



“ If there was one engine that defined this generation of games, it's Unreal Engine 3 ”



BETHESDA WANTS

RISKIER GAMES

“ I’ve had the philosophy of trying to remove everything that doesn’t relate to the story. Painters have been doing that for 400 years and have gotten really good at it. So, this is really about more abstract and stylised games – that’s the future. I think games, like any media, will try and become photorealistic first, but when that’s done what’s next? Anybody can do photorealism and scan things into a game, but that’s not the point. ”

VIKTOR ANTONOV VISUAL DESIGN DIRECTOR, DISHONORED



UBISOFT WANTS TO

MOVE BEYOND CONSOLES

“ As far as where *Assassin's Creed* will go, I really can't say. For me it's more than graphical fidelity, which I'm sure it will have. The idea of being connected all the time I think is a strong one, and I'd like to see that come through. Whether that translates into the games that come out, I couldn't tell you. I would like gaming and consoles to move beyond just being consoles. To have other functions and do them well. As far as what [Sony and Microsoft] are doing, I haven't the foggiest idea, but that's where I'd like to see it go. That would be great for *Assassin's Creed*, for sure. But as far as where it's going, I don't know. ”

MATT TURNER LEAD SCRIPTWRITER, ASSASSIN'S CREED III



CODEMASTERS WANTS

YOUR FEEDBACK

“ Apart from improvements in hardware power and interaction devices, I think it's going to become vital for developers to have the ability to foster a closer relationship with their players. It's sometimes very difficult to react to any sort of player feedback, as games normally have a gestation period of a few years, with players being in the dark until the last few months. It's likely that we'll see much more of a dialogue between developers and players in the future, and I'd ideally like to see this encouraged across all the main platforms. ”

MIKE CHAPMAN SENIOR GAME DESIGNER, DIRT: SHOWDOWN



GEARBOX WANTS

MEMORY UPGRADE

“ **PH:** Memory! For me it's always memory. We're always making trade-offs between memory and performance in that, if you do something to make a game's performance better, you've probably consumed more memory and vice versa. ”

JR: I'd probably say that Gearbox's official line is always 'memory'. [laughs]

PAUL HELLQUIST CREATIVE DIRECTOR, BORDERLANDS 2 + **JASON REISS** LEAD LEVEL DESIGNER, BORDERLANDS 2



MONKEYPAW WANTS

SUCCESSFUL PSN STORE

“More sales is what we'd like to see most! [PSN Store] is a very low-margin business and we need more downloads to continue to bring more games. More downloads means more publishers are willing to gamble with us. It's a simple formula for success. And like any business, success breeds success. It's a virtuous circle.”

JOHN GREINER PRESIDENT

FUTURLAB WANTS

MINIS REVAMP

“Trophy and networking support for minis will boost the perception of the platform in the eyes of gamers, and will therefore attract more talented developers. That's what the platform needs, in my opinion. There are some gems on minis, but the vast majority of gamers won't touch them.”

JAMES MARSDEN MANAGING DIRECTOR



What You Want



TIM NORRIS

Backward compatibility! Period. Full stop. Anything else is a bonus because it's bound to be better!

ELLIE CLARK

Cross-game voice chat really is needed. Also the ability to listen to personal music in all games!

DEAN BOOSH-BOOSH WELSH

Bluetooth. 7.1 surround. Better graphics. Trophies. Carry all your Trophies over. Various colours from the launch.

ANNE MARIE COYLE

More original games, not the 27th instalment of *Assassin's Creed* and *Call Of Duty*.

SIMON NELSON

A console that's designed to be used at home and on the go. A PS3-Vita hybrid. Imagine rather than continuing your season on *FIFA*, continuing the actual game without faffing with USBs and transferring save games.

NIK WADGE

A reasonable and fair price without the usual UK tax of USD to GBP translation.



@FENIXII

A powerful system that can do smart multi-tasking. This is what PS3 lacks.

@RH1169

Focus on gaming. Graphics and performance, that's all. And a redesigned controller, if I may add.

@WADDY101

An upgraded PSN where the downloads are fast, there is cross-game chat and everything is smooth.

@GEOFFDEGEOFF

A proper online experience that is unified across all games and does not require developers to code their own lobby all the time.

@ASTROMONKEY1980

A launch price that means I don't need to choose between buying it and not eating for a month.

@DEMADRED

60fps as standard in games.



THE FIRST PS4 GAMES

NOTHING HAS BEEN CONFIRMED YET, BUT IF WE WERE GAMBLING MEN, THIS IS WHAT WE'D EXPECT...



WATCH DOGS

"I think *Watch Dogs*, *The Last Of Us* [and] *Beyond* all are next-generation titles," said Wedbush Securities analyst Michael Pachter. *Watch Dogs* is the obvious pick of the bunch. Ubisoft's ambiguity over the title and the fact that the demo was running on a high-end PC rather than a current console points towards next gen. It's currently listed for PlayStation 3, but it could be a 'bridge' title, such as Activision's *Gun* (Xbox 360, Xbox, PlayStation 2 and GameCube release in November 2005).



THE LAST OF US

Sony will need to kick off its next-gen assault with a bang, and *The Last Of Us* is currently the biggest game Sony has. Naughty Dog hasn't made any games that have bridged platforms before, as the studio seems to prefer focusing on the strengths of one, but Pachter insists that *The Last Of Us* is bound for next gen. We'll see. It's also worth noting that Naughty Dog has two development teams – the one working on *The Last Of Us* and the team that made *Uncharted 3*. What's the latter up to now? Hmm.



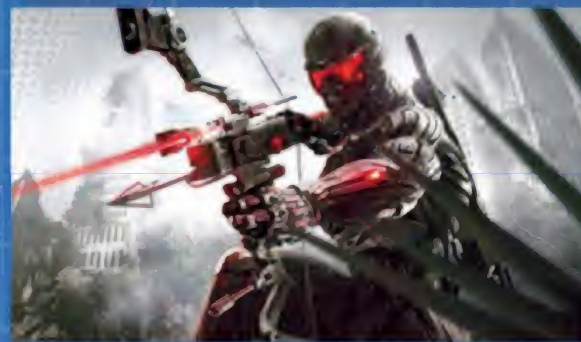
BEYOND: TWO SOULS

This is an interesting one. *Heavy Rain* was in development for a fair old while before eventually hitting the shelves, so there's no guarantee that *Beyond: Two Souls* is due soon, even though we got to grips with it at E3. Given *Heavy Rain* was eventually re-released with Move compatibility, if Sony wants to push Vita as a 'cross-controller', then surely this game is perfect for it. We suspect the decision on whether *Beyond* lands on PlayStation 4 ultimately rests with how much sway Sony believes the title has.



MODERN WARFARE 4

Infinity Ward has listed vacancies with an eye towards next gen, particularly those familiar with FPSs. What could it be that Infinity Ward is working on? If Activision sticks with its alternating of studios for *Call Of Duty* games – and there's been zero indication that this will change – the sequel to *Modern Warfare 3* will be due late in 2013. That's also the date analysts are circling as the launch for next-gen consoles from both Microsoft and Sony. Everything is lined up too well for this not to happen.



CRYSIS 3

As with the other titles here, there's no actual confirmation on whether *Crysis 3* is being primed for next gen, but given Crytek's position as the studio most likely to tickle new technology in the right places, it would be a bigger surprise if this didn't make the leap. The only reason this may not transition immediately is if Crytek feels unfamiliarity with the new technology means it won't be able to do *Crysis 3* justice. It took a while for Crytek to join the current console generation, after all.

BRAVIA

VERTICALITY

"In *Crysis*, you were a little more limited because you couldn't have that same amount of verticality that you do here," says Rasmus Hoejengaard, director of creative development at Crytek. "You can have a jungle and then suddenly you can go up a staircase, which gives you a lot of vertical gameplay such as sniping, flanking or jumping down on an enemy. Scale is no longer about making it horizontal and wide. We do that but also build it upwards. We don't want to build every area to be large. It depends on what we want to convey."



SONY

DENSE DETAIL

Crysis was all about the jungle. *Crysis 2* was all about a ruined city. *Crysis 3* is going to combine the two, showing off detail in both the nanosuit, the dense jungle and the destroyed city. It's a big task to undertake, but Crytek has shown it has just as big an appetite for pushing the technology as it does the gameplay, so *Crysis 3* will be a glamorous showcase for what the studio can do with current tech.

SCALING UP TO PS4

"I don't think we have a problem really," answered Hojengaard when asked if *Crysis 3* can be scaled up to the likes of PlayStation 4. "We have a DirectX 11 platform that's super capable, already very scalable. Already we're capable of scaling to slower platforms from high-end PC. We want the PC to be the leading platform so we can get an amazing high-end. In terms of next gen, I don't have anything to say about that except our current engine is one of the most advanced engines today."



PS Vita PlayStation 4's Pad?

What about Vita, then? Remarkably, despite the fact that Sony apparently forgot Vita existed during its own E3 press conference until Ubisoft reminded it, Sony does have plans for Vita that are actually quite exciting. Case in point: *LittleBigPlanet 2*.

Eh? But that's old, isn't it? Yes, yes, but the more questions you ask, the longer it will take to explain. *LittleBigPlanet 2* is being updated with 'cross-controller' functionality, so you can play the game on your TV while using your Vita as a touchpad of sorts.

We saw a demo where the guys from Media Molecule were playing a 2D vertical space shooter with the Vita's tilt controls while the second player tries to navigate the inside of the ship. Another level was more typical of the usual *LittleBigPlanet* fare, with 'apps' on the Vita to add extra control – Scanner allowed players to use x-ray vision, Radar showed where the prize bubbles and enemies are, and Tractor Beam lets you use the Vita's touch screen to move objects around. In this case, killing your co-op partner. With a block. By mistake. Oops.

There's a lot of potential there if Sony thinks of using Vita as a touchpad screen and control extension, which is what makes it bizarre to think that Sony elected not to show this off at E3 – it effectively cancels out one of the major advantages Wii U has and Microsoft is looking to forge with its SmartGlass app. Look for Sony's cross-controller functionality to be a big thing for PlayStation 4.



STAR WARS 1313

It might not be *Battlefront III*, but this could be better. Referring to an underground level on the planet Coruscant, *Star Wars 1313* is currently listed as a PC release and seems to be stretching just about beyond what PS3 can achieve without the Force being involved in some way. So this has joined the growing list of next-gen console suspects. It's not an MMO like *The Old Republic*, so it'll be a question of whether the technology can do it justice and if LucasArts wants to bring the title to PS4.



Image of Gran Turismo 5

GRAN TURISMO 6

Expecting it before 2108 would be a mistake, but producer Kaz Yamauchi has confirmed that work has begun on *Gran Turismo 6*. The development of its predecessor took an eternity and was plagued with problems up to and including its release, but *Gran Turismo* is intrinsically Sony – it has heritage, it has the will to push technology, and it has a mild eccentricity to it that helps it stand out.



PlayStation 4

Inside PS4

WHAT WEIRD WONDERS LURK INSIDE PLAYSTATION 4, YOU ASK? LET'S FIND OUT...

INTERNAL POWER

One thing Sony has been good at is keeping the power supply within its PlayStations. Unlike Xbox 360, there's been no need for an external power brick, and this has helped the slim, slick aesthetic of the consoles. Expect that to continue with PlayStation 4.

POWERXCELL

The PowerXCell 8i is IBM's improved version of the Cell microprocessor. It's a 65nm chip that supports 32GB of DDR2 memory and eight fully functional Synergistic Processing Elements, compared PlayStation 3's seven.

DIRECTX 11 GRAPHICS CARD

It hasn't been confirmed, but reports are that an AMD Radeon HD 7670 will be clocked up to 1GHz with up to 1GB of dedicated VRAM. This DirectX 11-enabled card, if rumours are to be believed, would mean PlayStation 4 would be graphically identical to Microsoft's next Xbox.

DUALSHOCK 3

Sony's prototype pads for PlayStation 3 showed that diverting from the classic DualShock is a huge risk and one it's unlikely to undertake with PlayStation 4. Look for some refinement – hopefully the analogue **L2 / R2** buttons are improved – but the general design will remain the same.

SLIMLINE STYLE

With Sony refusing to rule out the possibility of making PlayStation 3 even slimmer, it seems that svelte is chic at Sony HQ. Expect PlayStation 4 to be a very, very slender beast.

STREAMING

Streaming will be a viable option for PlayStation 4 owners, and we expect a partnership with a streaming technology company to emerge, with Galkal being the rumoured favourite. However, Blu-rays will still be the primary format.

BLU-RAY 8x

There have been rumours that Sony will ditch Blu-ray and run with holographic HVDs, but those drives are too expensive and too big. Sony will use a Blu-ray drive with 8x speed and 100GB discs.

USB 3.0

There will be four connections using the latest USB 3.0 tech. This will make it easier to do full backups of your PlayStation 4 content, effectively halving the time, and is especially important given the bigger discs.

CROSS-PLATFORM PLAY

There will be a lot of cross-platform play between PS Vita and PlayStation 4, something we're already seeing with PlayStation 3. More intriguing is the potential use of Vita's screen as a 'touch-screen tablet' of sorts. Will Sony use Vita in this way? Hmm.



TIMELINE

NOV 2006 – PlayStation 3 launched in Japan and US.

DEC 2006 – *GamePro* asks if PS4 will be here sooner than we think. Names 2010 as release date.

MAR 2007 – PlayStation 3 launched in Europe.

MAY 2007 – Rumours that PlayStation 4 is due "in 18 months" begin to circulate.

AUG 2008 – Dave Perry of Acclaim says PS3 cycle will last longer than PS2, doubts PlayStation 4 will happen.

FEB 2009 – Rumour that Sony drops Nvidia graphics in favour of Intel for PS4. Sony shoots down rumour.

MAY 2009 – Ubisoft said to be working on next-gen games. Prominent developers could be receiving their first next-gen dev kits.

MAR 2010 – Ten years since release of PS2, marking the end of Sony's ten-year console cycle. In practice, PlayStation 2 support ended years earlier.

JUNE 2010 – Sony rumoured to announce PlayStation 4 at E3 following blurry 'leaked' online video showing the console in action. E3 passes without an announcement.

NOV 2010 – First mooted release date for PlayStation 4 passes without incident.

OCT 2011 – Analyst Colin Sebastian says new PlayStation console is in the works.

NOV 2011 – Kazunori Yamauchi confirms that work on *Gran Turismo 6* has begun.

FEB 2012 – PS Vita released. Sony's Michael Denny mentions "ten-year console cycle" for PlayStation 3 in exclusive interview with **Play**.

MAR 2012 – Kotaku names 'Orbis' as PlayStation 4 internal codename.

APR 2012 – Reports that PlayStation 4 will launch ahead of next Xbox.

JUN 2012 – Despite rumours, E3 passes without PlayStation 4 announcement. *Watch Dogs* by Ubisoft announced, heavily rumoured to be first PlayStation 4 title.

JUL 2012 – YOU ARE HERE

NOV 2012 – Specs of Sony's next PlayStation confirmed.

MAR 2013 – PlayStation 4 partnership with Gaikai streaming platform announced.

JUN 2013 – Sony unveils PlayStation 4 at E3, publishers reveal launch games.

AUG 2013 – PS Vita compatibility with confirmed launch titles shown off at Gamescom.

NOV 2013 – PlayStation 4 launches.

What To Expect From PlayStation 4

MIND-BLOWING TECH

With Epic Games already wheeling out Unreal Engine 4, it seems that the technology is only going to get bigger and better. What the likes of Naughty Dog and Ubisoft Montreal tease from PlayStation 4 will be spectacular, terrifying, monstrous and all in all a bit bloody exciting.



BLU-RAYS OVER STREAMING

The next generation will arguably be the last that uses physical media. Downloads and streaming mean publishers don't have to worry about second-hand sales, while the continued success of services like PSN Store shows digital is the way forward. Problem? The UK's broadband infrastructure is poor.

RECOGNISED GAMES

If the 'bigger is better' mantra is adhered to, it means the cost of development will go up, which means there's even less chance of publishers gambling on new IP. Games like *Modern Warfare* and *Assassin's Creed* are safe. The likes of *Lollipop Chainsaw* and *Shadows Of The Damned* are not.



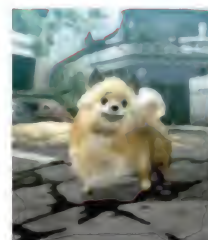
CHRISTMAS 2013 RELEASE

Christmas is the best time to release hardware, or anything in the games industry, and Sony clearly won't have a new console ready for this year as it focuses on Vita. With the next-gen rumours getting louder from analysts, developers and the media, expect Christmas next year to be PlayStation 4's time.

Install

Where fact + opinion ÷ PlayStation = the truth

Need To Know



Tokyo Jungle brings its weirdness to Europe

Sony will be releasing its deliciously weird *Tokyo Jungle* in Europe. Play as animals in an empty Tokyo, surviving and figuring out why mankind has disappeared. We had a dream like that once. We're never eating a whole wheel of cheese before bed again.

CONTENDER #1



Assassin's Creed III

RELEASE DATE: 31 OCTOBER

TOTAL SERIES SALES: 29 MILLION

WHY IT WILL SELL:

Because it's *Assassin's Creed*, innit? Seriously, though, Ubisoft's phenomenally popular franchise mixes historical intrigue with a beautiful playground and ultra violence. What's not to love? Expect this to sell like the proverbial thanks to updated mechanics – long overdue, it must be said – and the fact that it's set during the American Revolution.



facebook

What's your biggest game of 2012? Tell us at [facebook.com/PlayMagUK](https://www.facebook.com/PlayMagUK)

CONTENDER #2



Hitman: Absolution

RELEASE DATE: 20 NOVEMBER

TOTAL SERIES SALES: OVER 8 MILLION

WHY IT WILL SELL:

Square Enix and developer IO Interactive have spent a lot of time and effort trying to make the series appeal to a wider audience, reducing the punishing difficulty of the last games and introducing a more action-focused vibe while still retaining core stealth values. Basically, it'll sell well.

BLACK OPS II IS THIS 2012'S BIGGEST GAME?

With a spate of big games slipping to 2013, there are only four big contenders left to challenge Activision's dominance...

2012 it may be, but not a lot has changed when it comes to *Call Of Duty*. More specifically, pretty much no one wants to be in the way of that thing when it launches. Unless you're *Halo* – boo, hiss, etc – you'd better scarp around November.

Which is what a lot of games have done, sadly, for that reason and others. Financial trouble and just plain being unfinished are two others. The biggest loss was no doubt *BioShock Infinite*, which slipped from October to next year. The reason given was the usual noise about making the game all it can be, although rumours still persist that it's because Irrational is quietly slipping a multiplayer mode in there.

Infinite isn't the only big hitter to have disappeared. *South Park: The Stick Of Truth* also found itself bumped, no doubt ushered into safer 2013 territory by THQ's wobbly financials. With Trey Parker and Matt Stone on stage at Microsoft's E3 conference – and sending up Microsoft in the process – it's a shame to see this slip.

As it was when *Tomb Raider* was nudged to 2013. We can't wait to get our hands on this, and we're not the only ones, judging by the growing buzz surrounding it. Square Enix knows it can't afford to get this reboot wrong, which would explain why the title has scarpered for next year rather than face a scrap with *Black Ops II*.

The same can be said for *Aliens: Colonial Marines*. It never had a solid date, but we all assumed it would come out later this year. Now we know it will be chest-bursting 2013 to bits instead. It presumably doesn't help that its developer, Gearbox, is working on roughly 5,000 games right now. *DmC* is another high-profile victim, alongside the excellent-looking *Metro: Last Light*.

Disappointing, especially as if those had all come out and lived up to their potential then 2012 could have been a banner year. So what's left, and can any of the contenders challenge *Black Ops II*'s attempts to maintain *Call Of Duty*'s grasp on the title of biggest game of the year?



Grand Theft Auto V due before April 2013

So says Cowen Group analyst Doug Creutz, looking at Take-Two's financial forecasts. "We believe management could not provide this [...] with any degree of confidence if it did not anticipate shipping *GTA V* during FY13." Not much longer now, right?



Two Worlds developer does survival horror

Reality Pump, the studio behind the suitably pump *Two Worlds*, is now turning to survival horror. *Sacrilegium* will be set in modern-day Romania and features Vlad the Impaler. *Two Worlds* had plenty of accidental horror, so let's see how it does at intentional horror!



No Call of Duty XP 2012

Activision took another step towards global dominance last year with its successful *Call of Duty* XP expo, but it won't return this year. Activision will look towards Gamescom as the platform to launch the hype train for *Call of Duty: Black Ops II*. Future *Call of Duty* XP events haven't been ruled out, though.

CONTENDER #3



Medal Of Honor: Warfighter

RELEASE DATE: 26 OCTOBER
TOTAL SERIES SALES: LOADS
WHY IT WILL SELL:

There was a time when *Medal Of Honor* was the biggest thing in FPS gaming. Granted, that was a long time ago, but the name still draws in the punters: 2010's mediocre reboot shifted over 2 million copies, which isn't a bad return. Expect this sequel to be much improved, and sell more as a result.

CONTENDER #4



Resident Evil 6

RELEASE DATE: 2 OCTOBER
TOTAL SERIES SALES: 49 MILLION
WHY IT WILL SELL:

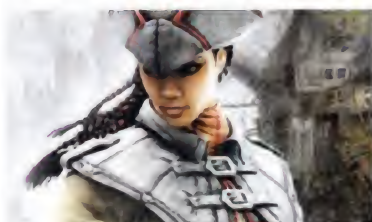
Since it reinvented itself in 2005 with *Resident Evil 4*, the series has got more and more action-focused, culminating in *Resi 5*, where a man literally punches a boulder out of the way. Stupid? Yes, but it's this kind of nonsense, combined with all manner of over-the-top action, that appeals to the wider audiences that publishers desperately crave.

THE BEST IS YET TO COME

2012

XCOM: Enemy Unknown Sleeping Dogs Hitman: Absolution Dead Or Alive 5 Guardians Of Middle-earth Brothers In Arms: Furious 4 Risen 2 Madden NFL 13 Dishonored Resident Evil 6 PES 13 Epic Mickey 2 F1 2012 Worms Collection WWE 13 NBA 2K13 Rocksmith 007 Legends Black Ops II Assassin's Creed III Persona 4 Lego Lord Of The Rings Tales Of Graces f NBA 2K13 The Dark Eye: Demonicon Medal Of Honor: Warfighter Borderlands 2 Far Cry 3 Transformers: Fall Of Cybertron Need For Speed: Most Wanted FIFA 13 Just Dance 4 Darksiders II Crysis 3 PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale Tekken Tag Tournament 2 Naughty Bear: Panic In Paradise Watch Dogs 2013 Metro: Last Light God Of War: Ascension Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance LittleBigPlanet Karting Grand Theft Auto V Beyond: Two Souls Dead Space 3 Prey 2 South Park: The Stick Of Truth BioShock Infinite Aliens: Colonial Marines DmC Tomb Raider Star Trek The Last Of Us Injustice: Gods Among Us Lost Planet 3

AND NOT FORGETTING VITA.



ASSASSIN'S CREED III: LIBERATION



COD: BLACK OPS DECLASSIFIED



LITTLEBIGPLANET

INSTALL



20 Years Of Mortal Kombat Fatalities

Mortal Kombat has turned 20. Happy birthday, *Mortal Kombat*! That's 20 years of Fatalities and moments like these...



If you can keep your head... (MK)

Genuinely shocking back in the mythical day. If only the moaners could have seen what was coming.



Smoke is MAD (MK III)

Bit of an overreaction, this one, as Smoke blows up the entire planet. Then, somehow, rebuilds it and fights on it again. Which is surprisingly never shown.



Silent but deadly (MK: Deception)

According to legend, all men have tried to light their farts on fire. Bo Rai Cho succeeds more than most.



BANG! (MK vs DC)

Due to excessive censorship, most *MK vs DC* Fatalities were rubbish. This one actually worked, as the Joker taunts his foe with a joke gun and then shoots him through the head with the real thing.



Bored to death (MK vs DC)

And here's the other side of the coin: Captain Marvel throws people into the floor. They get stuck. Brilliant.



This is how to play *Hitman*. If you like being wrong.

HITMAN: ABSOLUTION

"HAVE SOME FAITH!"

Hitman: Absolution's game director, Tore Blystad, tells people to have some confidence in IO Interactive

He recognises us immediately from the *Hitman: Absolution* demo, when we may have sneaked in a cheeky question about old *Hitman* vs new as everyone filed out of the room. "You were asking questions about classic *Hitman*!" shouts game director Tore Blystad with a big grin on his face. "Try to imagine that we were having that conversation two months ago. I knew that stuff was there. I knew it! Have some faith!"

He bellows with laughter again. He's referring to the first unveiling of 'classic' *Hitman* gameplay in *Absolution*. "When we revealed the game, with the cinematic approach, we wanted to show the new engine," explains Blystad. "With the orphanage level, we wanted to show the AI and how it adapts. Now we're coming full circle and saying this is your target, go nuts. But it's really important to know that there's no forced combat. With the exception of your target, which is fair game, no one else in theory should be touched to get to him."

We'll have the full hands-on report next issue.



PUSHING NARRATIVE HOW WILL STORY BE TOLD?

"We have really gone to town with cut-scenes in this one. There are different layers on each level. Some of it is when you're playing through the level. If you listen to the main secondary characters, you'll get more hints of where the story is going. But also with the cut-scenes, we're really pushing the story."



A HITMAN FIRST WHY HAVE CHECKPOINTS?

"We have checkpoints for pacing reasons. One reason is the player investing half an hour or more and then dying at the end. That is not fun. We want the player to invest in the level, maybe fail, but not lose too much time. That's what checkpoints allow us to do. You can reload and fail and you won't lose too much. Which we're not sure it will, to be honest."

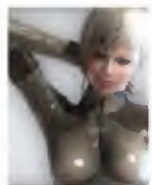


KANE & LYNCH 2 IS THERE ANY INFLUENCE?

"What both games have in common is the team members have great pride working on them. No matter how they were received, people wanted to do it because they believed in them. Especially for *Hitman*, which has a proven track record and is so important for the industry, at least in Denmark, there is a lot of pride working on this title."

THE REAL-LIFE LAUGHING BEAUTY

Crystal Graziano loves Metal Gear and she looks far better dressed as Laughing Beauty than we do. Take our word for it



Why cosplay as Laughing Beauty?

Laughing Beauty really made an impression on me when I first played MGS4. The way she slowly follows you with the eerie laughing really creeped me out. Metal Gear characters are usually very cool, but they also often have aspects

to them that border on absurd. It's this perfect mix of seriousness and humour that really draws me to the games. There are also quite a few women who kick butt in the games, and it's that type of character that I like to cosplay!

What's the costume made of?

It's two different grey shades of wet-look spandex, as well as a matte black vinyl. I also incorporated coaxial video cables and weatherstripping for some of the raised details of the costume. I also had stamps custom-made so that the text on the suit would be accurate.

Photo © LJinto

“There are also quite a few women who kick butt in the games, and it's that type of character that I like to cosplay!”

Have you ever heard any word on what Kojima thinks of your cosplay?

Yes, I have! In 2010, Kojima selected me as the winner of a Metal Gear cosplay contest as 'Sweet Snake' Raiden and flew me to Japan to compete at the MGS cosplay contest at Tokyo Game Show.

He selected me as the winner there as well, and Konami asked me to judge their cosplay contest at San Diego Comic-Con 2011. It really makes me happy that the creator of the games I love so much likes my costumes!

Did you do the hysterical laughter as well?

I did actually do the laugh for a few people who asked for it!

We'll presume you didn't go as far as doing the ink vomiting.

Thankfully, no one asked me to vomit ink, so I did not do that.

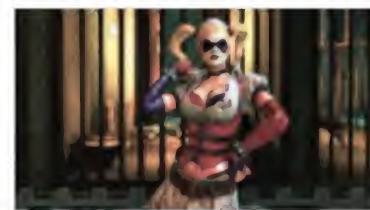
What are the chances of you cosplaying as The End?

I would love to cosplay The End. I could go to a convention and sleep while someone pushes me around in the wheelchair, and I do actually have a Mosin-Nagant...

You can find more of Crystal Graziano's costumes, including Raiden and Venus from Metal Gear Acid, over at crystalcosfx.com

PSYCHOTIC BOSSSES

Laughing Beauty is crazy but is she the craziest boss on PS3? Not quite...



HARLEY QUINN

Batman: Arkham Asylum

Harley taunts Batman from behind iron bars and reinforced windows. Then she decides to take on the Caped Crusader and cartwheels towards him, so he grabs her by the leg and throws her into a wall, knocking her out of the rest of the game. Seems fair.



PAULA

Shadows Of The Damned

Your girlfriend is kidnapped by the Lord of Demons, who kills her repeatedly. Her body splits in half and becomes a Hellbeast, with her head moaning, "I just want to give up and die." She eventually transforms into a demon, furious that you didn't save her.



JESTER

Devil May Cry 3 HD

There is a story reason for Jester dancing around Dante, but for the most part, he seems like a laughing buffoon who attacks with giant purple balls. Ahem. He explodes with confetti when shot, making him the closest gaming has come to a piñata boss.



CHEF ANTOINE

Dead Rising 2

He's to be interviewed when the outbreak occurs, sending the fame-hungry chef mad when the journalist never shows. So he starts chopping up survivors for his dishes. But he's still witty, even in his madness. "Sit, relax and Antoine will make you dinner!"



RAMON SALAZAR

Resident Evil 4

He dresses like Napoleon and laughs like a hyena, but then he spends his entire life in a remote, booby-trapped castle. It's the life Play would like to lead, but we're restricted by stuff like needing an internet connection. How does Salazar get by without it?

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I loved how different *Darksiders* appeared to be from other games. I can't wait to kick ass as Death!

DANIEL STEPHEN BRADLEY

I love that Eternal Death trailer where he's seen through history... EPIC.

BRANDON HARLIM

The main guy actually looks a bit like a mechanical Hulk.

ISKANDER SNOTTOB

It definitely looks like an improvement over the first game. It'd be interesting to see how they merge War's story with Death's.

BRADLEY ALEXANDER FISHER

I'm totally stoked. I wasn't till I bought the discounted *Darksiders* from the store then saw the vids, but now I can't wait.

TONY WATSON SKELTON

The first game was awesome, totally worth the play, but has this one come too late? It's been a long time since the first one. Hoping it doesn't get lost and people don't buy it.

DARREN ATKINSON

I'm really pumped for it. Although I got the first *Darksiders* and never played it so ended up selling it, I hope the same doesn't happen with *Darksiders II*. Plus, Death is cooler.

PAUL GURNEY



YouTube
youtube.com/PlayMagUK

Essentially has the feeling of *Devil May Cry* combined with *Zelda*. The *Zelda* feel is completely undeniable in my eyes. The puzzles, the boss fighting systems are nearly identical, in a good way. The thing that separates it is the button mash style of attack combined with a few skills to make it a little better than *Dragon Age*. Art looks great, and come on, who doesn't want to hear Death's story?

It looks like a big improvement over the first one: I'm excited for its release :D

MATHEW STONE

Once they've done the Four Horsemen I'd love for them to take this IP into a different direction and maybe have a regular human character work

his way through the world, trying to survive while the angels and demons rip themselves apart.

DBZM1K3

The game looks so good. I wish I could make love to it.

SIMMIEBIRD

This looks so much like the *Prince Of Persia* style of getting around. The first one. Y'know, the one that was actually good.

THEKANKEINAFACOR

God Of War + Prince Of Persia + Shadow Of The Colossus + Zelda + Legacy Of Kain = Darksiders II

GOUASMI

omg its all kopied from *god of war*

NICO WODITSCH

twitter
twitter.com/PlayMag_UK

@CHASETHELIGHT

I kind of want it but the lack of War (and in turn Liam O'Brien's amazing voice) puts me off.

@PROTAG22

The first *Darksiders*, although derivative, is easily one of the most entertaining games this gen. Sequel is a MUST PLAY.

@FRANKIEADZ

Yes I'm looking forward to it. Gutterpointed to see it being delayed, but that's a blessing as it's saving me money too :)

@METALPAUL1000

I'm looking forward to seeing if there is a game of

Battleships as a side mission, *Bill & Ted*-style.

@WARD_17

Haven't played the first one as it was out same time as *God Of War III*. From what I've seen it looks pretty awesome. I love Death!

@HANKBIZZLE

Looking very much forward to it. The first one was brilliant and hugely underrated. It was huge!

@CHRIS1_9_80

Pre-ordered ages ago. Love the story and the nearest we'll get to a proper adult-themed *Zelda*. #deathcomestoall

Play Online

Want your voice to be heard? Then scream louder at facebook.com/PlayMagazineUK, youtube.com/PlayMagUK and [@PlayMag_UK](https://twitter.com/PlayMag_UK), where we hang out when not doing work (ie. all the time)

DARKSIDERS II

INSTANT EXPERT

DMC: DEVIL MAY CRY

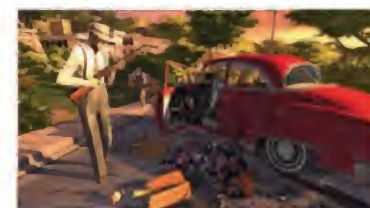
What is Ninja Theory doing to Capcom's venerable series?



2014'S FIRST GAME CONFIRMED



It might actually come out in 2013, but 2K Marin's *XCOM* – the FPS one – is now slated for a release in Take-Two's 2014 fiscal year. What does this mean? Well, it means a game rumoured to have started development in 2005 now won't see the light of day until between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2014.

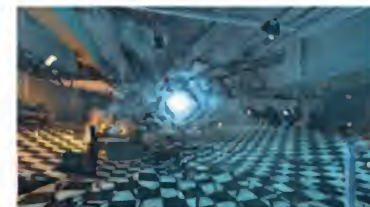


This doesn't shock us too much – Take-Two already has the separate, more recently announced, strategy-focused *XCOM: Enemy Unknown* coming this year, so there would be a conflict there. Plus the reception that the FPS *XCOM* has received was a little... unimpressed, shall we say, and 2K Marin has reportedly gone back to the drawing board on a number of elements in the game as a result. While it's nowhere near 'good' news or ideal in the slightest, it isn't exactly what we'd call unexpected.



What would we guess at for an actual release date? Well, putting our heads together, we would say around September of 2013. And if not that, for whatever reason, we'd put our second guess in the early 2014 basket. That would mean a game *nine* years in the making. We can only hope that *XCOM* will be anything like worth the wait.

Just don't mention *Duke Nukem Forever*.



THE LAST RELEVANCE

The Last Guardian still isn't with us, and we have to wonder: is it still relevant?



IT'S FADED INTO the background once more: the mighty saviour of PS3; the great hope from Team Ico; that which would both show us that gaming is relevant as an art form and that the PS3 is the place to go for games that offer something actually different. I've almost forgotten about *The Last Guardian*, even though it's all those things. Even though I'm still really looking forward to it. Even though I'm starting to worry that it's never actually going to see a release.

But that's all a concern that sits on the periphery, at least for me. Because I find myself wondering more and more: does the PS3 actually need *The Last Guardian*? The game started being made around 2007, as far as we're aware, and was first publicly revealed, after much speculation, in early 2009. That's a long time ago in gaming terms.

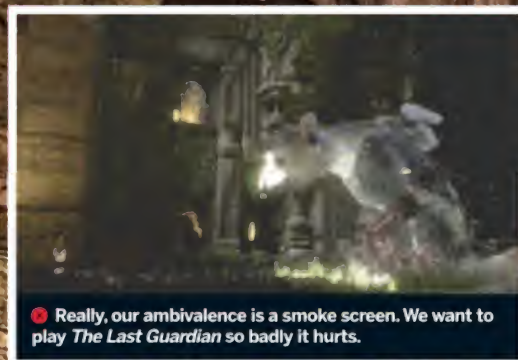
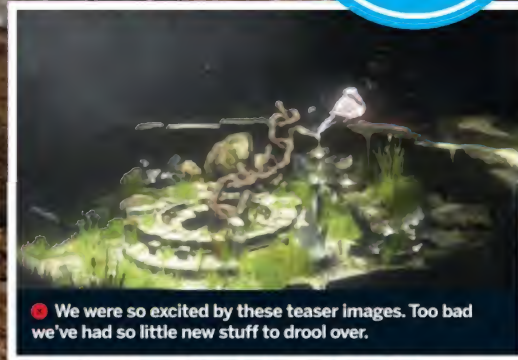
That's before *Uncharted 2* arrived and made PS3 gaming incredible. That's before *Modern Warfare 2*, even before *Black Ops*, came along and said: "Hi, I'm a billion-dollar franchise." It's before PS3 had really settled. It's before sales had caught up with Xbox 360. It's before PS Vita. It's before so many huge changes to the gaming landscape that it's hard to think of reasons we do still need *The Last Guardian* to arrive and show us all why PS3 is so great and why we love Team Ico so.

But there are reasons why *The Last Guardian* still matters – why it's still needed. When it was originally announced it was when the PS3 was on shakier ground, and its arrival in the last three years would surely have shored up the console's position with gamers the world over. The *Uncharted 2* Effect, as I've just decided to call it. But that isn't the desired effect any more.

What we need from *The Last Guardian* these days is to give us a game that stands out. To give us a major, mainstream release that offers something beyond shooting, that offers something beyond fantasy RPGs in a rip-off of Tolkien, that offers something that isn't just a damn annual update of a series we were bored of three years ago.

The Last Guardian needs to be this generation's *Shadow Of The Colossus*. Even if it fails to smash commercial records like that game did, at least we'll have it. We can play it. We can enjoy it. We can look back and remember it. Then we can get all arrogant about it in five years when the Ultra-HD re-release comes out – via space internet of the future where you download it straight into your hover-brain, obviously – and I begin the future-Twitter lectures about how you're all fools for not buying it first time around.

That's why we need *The Last Guardian*.



“The Last Guardian needs to be this generation's *Shadow Of The Colossus*. Even if it fails to smash records, at least we'll have it”



THE FIRST CLUES FOR MODERN WARFARE 4

Next-gen signs of FPS sequel appear, but who's going to make it?

The first signs of *Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 4* have appeared on Infinity Ward's official website. With the site itself undergoing a redesign, visiting it takes you straight through to the jobs listing for the studio, which is a treasure trove of clues on what it's planning next.

One job listing, for the position of senior network engineer, is for "an exciting unannounced title for next-generation console systems". Another, for senior gameplay engineer, asks for an "interest in games, preferably first-person shooters", while anyone applying for

the game designer vacancy "must be able to list techniques used to make fun FPS combat".

So no surprise, then, that the next title being lined up for Infinity Ward to develop appears to be a next-gen first-person shooter.

But who will be left to make the game? Infinity Ward will be without key faces Vince Zampella, Jason West and Robert Bowling, while the studio lost almost half its employees last year. The recently concluded legal battle between Activision and Zampella and West painted an ugly picture of the studio culture, as did the comments by

Robert Bowling in an interview a month before his departure: "I feel like we are in a f***ing era where everyone is so focused on subscriber numbers and all that stuff, that we need to get back to what I feel like we did so much better in the days of just plain good will."

Sledgehammer Games was originally drafted to make a third-person *Call Of Duty* title but ended up filling in the gaps left by the Infinity Ward departures and lending a hand in co-developing *Modern Warfare 3* and its DLC. Will it be the same story again for *Modern Warfare 4*? We've got a year and a half before we get an answer...



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Here's what happened to the key members who left Infinity Ward



GRANT COLLIER
CO-FOUNDER

He was the public face of the series up to *Call Of Duty 4*, which had both betas and visits from PC mod makers to test the multiplayer. Left in 2009 to work on "special projects" at Activision and has rarely been seen publicly since.



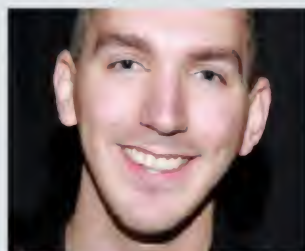
VINCE ZAMPELLA
CO-FOUNDER

One of the original Infinity Ward members and also one of the nicest people in the industry who *Play* has had the fortune to meet, Zampella was fired by Activision in 2010. He has since set up Respawn Entertainment under EA's banner.



JASON WEST
PRESIDENT

As with Zampella, West was fired by Activision in 2010 and is another Respawn Entertainment co-founder. West also served as game director and chief technical officer on the *Call Of Duty* titles up until his departure.



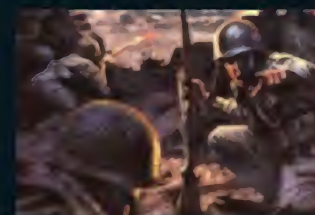
ROBERT BOWLING
CREATIVE STRATEGIST

Former public face of *Call Of Duty* but let the mask slip on occasion – he called Activision's Noah Heller "senior super douche" and ranted about Activision a month before leaving in 2012. Set up Robotoki, where he is studio head.

INFINITY WARD TIMELINE

02 Grant Collier and Vince Zampella form Infinity Ward. All original 22 members of staff previously worked on *Medal Of Honor: Allied Assault*.

03 *Call Of Duty* released on PC and goes on to win 90 game of the year awards. The day after it's released, Activision buys Infinity Ward.



05 *Call Of Duty 2* released on PC and Xbox 360. It scores 85-90% in reviews.

06 Patch released to improve *Call Of Duty 2* multiplayer, which starts becoming popular.

07 *Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare* released, as Infinity Ward swells to 100 employees. Multiplayer is a huge success.



08 The first DLC for *Modern Warfare*, the Variety Pack, releases and is downloaded by over a million people in its first nine days on sale.

09 Collier leaves Infinity Ward to join Activision. *Modern Warfare 2* released and earns over \$550 million in its first five days on sale.

10 Zampella and Jason West fired. The two file a lawsuit against Activision, with Activision filing a countersuit. 46 other employees also leave Infinity Ward.



11 *Modern Warfare 3* released. It immediately becomes the highest-grossing entertainment release of all time, pulling in \$400 million in its first day on sale.

12 Robert Bowling leaves Infinity Ward and Activision. The lawsuits filed in 2010 are settled out of court.

INSTALL

TOP 5

VIOLENT GAMES



Since their inception, videogames have been mostly about one thing: killing everyone that's not you and yours deadlier than Betamax. And as the graphical capabilities of the machines get better, so do their depictions of violence. Here are the most horrible death-dealers in town



1 MANHUNT (PS2)

Rockstar's criminally misunderstood examination of violence is, by design, grotesque. When you can stab a man in the eyes with a shard of glass, you know you're into some savage times, and that example is just one of many. Brrrr.

2 SNIPER ELITE V2 (PS3)

In this game, you can shoot a man's testicles to pieces with a high-powered rifle. No biggie; we've all been there. Most games, however, don't show you an internal view of all this terror. *Sniper Elite V2* does, and then it laughs hysterically. Just wait until you shoot a soldier through the eye. It'll haunt your dreams.



3 X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE (PS3)

Supposedly based on a script for the movie that was later watered down for the big screen, from the first second of *Wolverine* you'll be cutting limbs off and jamming heads into spinning helicopter rotor blades. As such, this is the greatest game of all time. Perhaps.



4 DEAD SPACE 2 (PS3)

The original game was already pretty bloody, but, as the law of sequels dictates, *Dead Space 2* takes it to new limits. Sure, there are a lot of games where you blow limbs off – albeit not often as a key game mechanic – but there aren't many where you have to power drill your own eye to smithereens.

5 CONDEMNED 2 (PS3)

The first instalment in this series, *Condemned: Criminal Origins*, never made it to the PS3, but it was a psychological thriller that saw you smacking tramps in the face with lead pipes and lumps of wood in first-person. Pretty brutal stuff, right? Well, the sequel makes that one look like *Blue's Clues*: giant man-eating bears, heads in duffel bags, and the ability to shout mens' heads into a gloopy mess.



TEAM PICKS

Our favourite violent games



STEVE PES 6

Once again, it's *PES*: the game for all seasons. On a holiday, I broke my PSP by flinging it after another curious scripting decision reared its ugly head. Truly horrific. I should have sued.



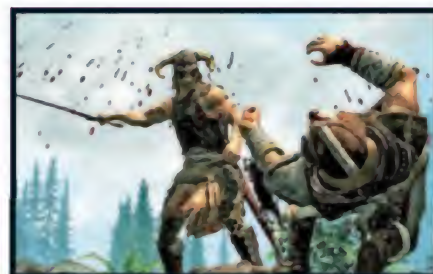
RYAN PROTOTYPE 2

You mash **△** and dodge the sloshing gore. Slice people in half with manclaws! Stitch torn limbs into the sky! Watch people explode in bloody clouds! It's my Las Vegas holiday plus the odd mission objective.



IAN PLANTS VS ZOMBIES

Merciless slaughter of plants, eaten alive in front of your eyes. Poor zombies, just following their instincts, cut down in their undead prime. It's brutal. It's out and out war. It's horrifying.



ANDY SKYRIM

You can attack anyone in *Skyrim*! And I do! "Everything's for sale!" says the shopkeeper. So I kill him! Lydia follows me around. So I kill her! Hang on. What are these images on this page? What? *Other games*!?

Agent 47

He's been in hiding for a while, but it's almost time for Agent 47 to step out of the shadows. To celebrate, let's see what makes him tick... tick... boom

UPCOMING HITS

AS A WELL-KNOWN KILLING MACHINE, 47 IS THE MAN TO CALL WHEN YOU NEED SOMEONE TAKEN OUT. WITH THAT IN MIND, HERE'S WHO WE'RE GOING TO 'HAVE DONE'



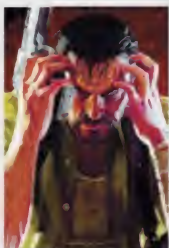
DJ ATOMIKA (BURNOUT PARADISE)

There were a lot of things wrong with *Paradise* when it first came out. Most of these have been fixed. One remains: this gratingly American DJ, bent on ruining your fun with his stupid voice. This will soon be amended.



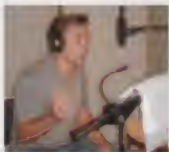
CLOUD STRIFE (FINAL FANTASY VII)

Look, we know you might love *Final Fantasy VII* because you played it as a kid and you didn't know any better, but come on. Cloud is rubbish. That's why we're having Cloud killed, so he can't appear in the remake.



MAX PAYNE (MAX PAYNE)

We love Max Payne, but he's not in a good way, is he? Always moaning and drinking and crying and shooting people – it's like *Play* when the cover falls through on deadline day. Time to put him out of his misery.



NOLAN NORTH (EVERY GAME EVER)

Because we're sick of hearing his stupid voice. Not really, though. *Uncharted* wouldn't be the same without him.

BALD

In a videogame world of grizzled, dirty-faced marines with beards/jarheads/bandanas, Agent 47's bald bonce and clean shave stand out. In his world, however, it doesn't really stand out at all; he's designed to be as forgettable as possible. Yes, he's got a barcode, which we'll get to later, but just try to picture 47 in your mind. Can you honestly remember his face?

Yes? Liar. Steve can only remember what he looks like because he's the exact spitting image of his old university professor, who was, now he thinks about it, out of the country a lot.

BARCODE

Although we salute 47's choice of bland features to blend in, we can't help but feel that having a big barcode on the back of your head might be a giveaway. He wouldn't be the same person without it, being as it is a reminder of his clone heritage, but it's very conspicuous. Maybe he could get it covered up? Maybe a tattoo of a giant white hood. Yes, that is less conspicuous, isn't it?

No. What 47 needs are wigs. We can't believe they haven't already been made a standard in the series, if only for comic effect. Imagine killing a room full of people while wearing a Kevin Keegan wig. Or a natty Don King getup. Maybe a mullet? Now that is chilling.

SUITING UP

47's face may be forgettable, but his attire is not. Black suit, white shirt, red tie and leather gloves are the order of, well, every day.

Although he's encouraged to change into other attire to get the job done, 47 is too methodical to leave his threads behind. Or, at least he's learned to be: *Hitman: Blood Money* started punishing players who wanted top marks by docking them points for leaving their suit on site.

Again, though, we can't help but feel that his professional attire is a hindrance to his job. It's okay in missions where he needs to wear a suit, but when you're turning up at the backwater wedding for a couple of hicks, you might think you're slightly overdressed.

As with the wigs, would it not be better for 47 to actually dress for the occasion? No. Because that would remove all the challenge, fools. And if there's one thing a *Hitman* game should be, it's challenging.

WEAPONS GRADE

If you've ever watched John Woo classic/Jean-Claude Van Damme mullet-fest *Hard Target*, you'll know that a true professional always carries the right tool for the job. No surprise, then, that 47 never gets it wrong.

Never without his trusty Silverballer pistols – which aren't actually that stealthy, because it looks like he's holding a couple of cars in his hands – 47's ability to use both firearms and implements as weapons is extraordinary. Have you ever played a game where you can kill a man by slipping poison fugu fish into his dinner? Exactly.

One thing we would like to see for *Hitman: Absolution*, however, is the return of the gun shed from *Hitman 2*. Like Arnie in *Commando*, 47 harboured all the kit he took off site, enabling you to fully customise your loadout. It was dropped for more small-scale weapon upgrades in *Blood Money*. But surely a professional would have both?

Re:Play

Send us words and they appear here! It's magic!

We're eradicating violent games and advising you on the gaming music you should listen to on the loo. Ladies and gentlemen, we are **Play** magazine – both an educational and cultural institution!

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VITA GOING BACKWARDS

Hi **Play**! Firstly, love the mag, as all readers do (or they should! *angry face*).

Anyway, I know the Vita is a fairly new release so it's not that big on names or brands yet, but I'm already bored of it! It's a brilliant little machine, there's no doubt, and it's mighty powerful with a decent battery life too, but it just doesn't have anything new.

For starters, I can't even play

my PSone downloads on it, which was one of my favourite things to do on my old PSP. *Resident Evil* and *Final Fantasy VII* being my favourite games to play. If it's such a monster (and it has TWO sticks) then shouldn't it also be able to play my PS2 games? It would be awesome to

cruise around the streets on *NFS: Most Wanted*. Hell, I'd even settle for a *DMC* or *MGS* port.

That would be awesome and I could make it my new home console so that I can be entertained while my wife watches crap like *One Born Every Minute* and the unfiltered turd that is *TOWIE*.

But my point is that there's not enough to do. Sure, it boasts touch screens, cameras, social apps and media (even though I can't

seem to view YouTube properly on mine or Netflix!) it doesn't even have proper backwards compatibility! I mean come on! Am I really supposed to wait until developers realise its potential and release decent games like *GTA* and *Splinter Cell*? Because if that's the case I just don't think I'll make it, guys!! It's not fair!

Jamie Green

PSone games are now coming to Vita, so we presume you've been dancing in the streets to celebrate in the time since you writing and us replying. As for PS2 games, it's not horsepower that's the problem, as Vita packs more heat than PS2, but architecture. They two just aren't compatible and that is the problem. As for *TOWIE*, we agree, but only because we're *Made In Chelsea* fans. Come at us, bro.



STAR LETTER



SICK OF LOADING & PATCHES

Is there a reason that, for example, *FIFA 12* takes an endless eternity to load, from PS3 main menu to playable game, whereas you can pop in *Modern Warfare 3* and be loaded up and ready to go inside ten seconds with three clicks of \otimes ? Is *FIFA* really that much more dense than other games that it requires the millennia that it takes to boot up? I miss the days of *Insert – SEGA! – press start to begin*. Also, I'm getting sick of all the

patches being constantly released. I bet if you go to eat at the Sony restaurant, you pay your money up front and they give you half a starter, then sporadically mail you the rest of your meal over the next 3-12 months.

Conor O'Toole

Blu-rays take a while to load, so it's up to developers to disguise it. Notice how the cut-scenes can't be skipped

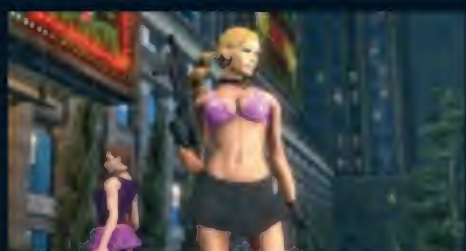
in *Max Payne 3*? How some areas in *Uncharted 3* can only be accessed by a door with a slow animation? The Animus in *Assassin's Creed*? All smart ways of hiding loading times.

As for patches, however, they are a problem and getting worse. Is the games industry skimping on QA, knowing dodgy code and bugs can be patched up further down the line? It's almost certainly happening, sadly.

YouTube

www.youtube.com/PlayMagUK

Things you may have missed on our YouTube page



SAINTS ROW: THE THIRD
PENTHOUSE DLC



XCOM: ENEMY UNKNOWN
DEEP DIVE TRAILER



THE CAVE
REVEAL TRAILER



Write in, and win! Every letter we print receives a free game. This month, the senders win the brilliant *DiRT: Showdown* and a T-shirt, and we're not just saying it's brilliant because it's the prize but because it genuinely is brilliant fun. So well done, winners. Everyone else – GET WRITING.

THE BIG ISSUE NO MORE VIOLENT GAMES?

Imagine peace on earth. Wouldn't it be great? No wars, conflicts or mindless violence. Actually, come to think of it, that would mean the end of modern gaming as we know it! Most games nowadays are based on warfare and violence, so where would future game developers get their ideas and inspiration from?

Sure, we would still have *LittleBigPlanet* and *FIFA* left, but this ban on all violence would mean no slide tackling and no whacking your friends with frying pans. Fortunately, that will never happen, so I can calm down and the great people at **Play** can keep their jobs. So what do you guys reckon? Would gaming be as entertaining and addictive if it weren't for the violence?

P.S. What happened to your 'stupid letter' column?

Tadzio Gieldon-Bruce

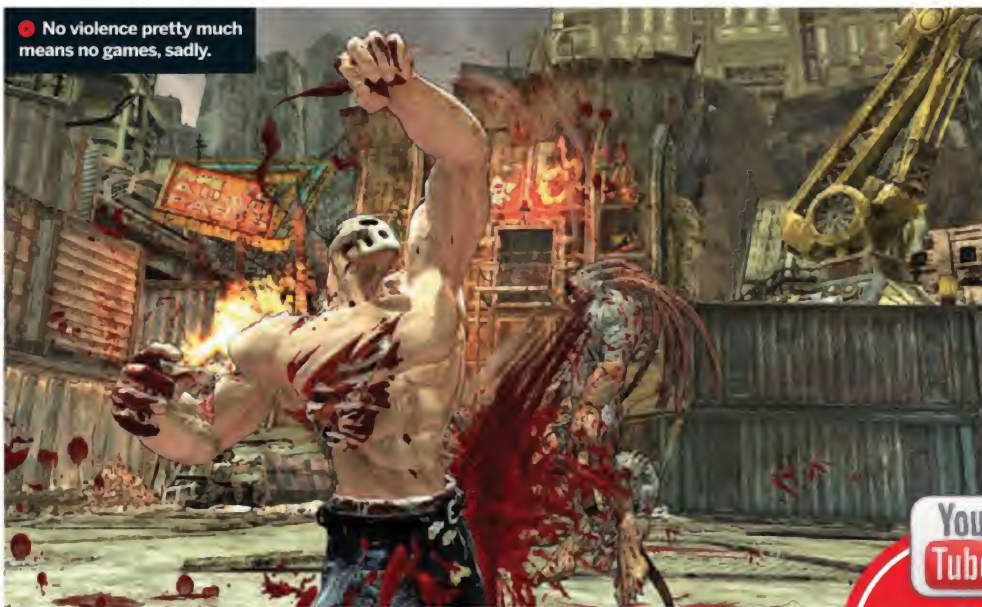
People didn't send in enough stupid letters. Hard to believe, eh? So we ditched it, but it's only resting. Dormant. It lies, waiting. If there's ever a fresh wave of stupidity, we'll bring it back, kicking and screaming. Consider its retirement a positive sign.

As for games without violence, we once tried to make a list of PS3 games without any kind of shooting or violence in. And there weren't many.

Games usually rely on players achieving a goal and that goal usually involves resolving a conflict to provide drama, challenge and interest. And that usually leads to – surprise, surprise – violence!

Imagine if *L.A. Noire* was purely about solving murders, or if *Mirror's Edge* was just about free-running. Sadly, mass market appeal means bringing in conflict and violence, so it's not going to change soon.

● No violence pretty much means no games, sadly.



YouTube

YouTube

Peep the latest trailers and hottest gaming clips at youtube.com/PlayMagUK



SLEEPING DOGS
101 TRAILER



METRO: LAST LIGHT
ENTER THE METRO SHORT FILM



MASS EFFECT 3
REBELLION DLC

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We take to our Facebook army made up of our nearest and dearest to ask...



Play

What's your favourite ever PS3 multiplayer game?

Like • Comment • Share • about an hour ago •

Martin MacKinnon *Resistance* series. It's far better to play split-screen, especially how one character is ignored in all the cut-scenes.

Tom Watson *Borderlands!*

Dean Boosh-Boosh Welsh Despite getting panned, *Resident Evil 5*.

Darren Scott *Uncharted 3*. All the best bits of single-player with other people included.

Louise Galt My favourites are *Borderlands* and *Resident Evil 5*.

Tony Watson Skelton *Borderlands* or *Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit* are the only ones I play multiplayer on.

Matt Oldfield *Uncharted 2*! Beautiful environments and had some bloody good times on it.

Alessio Cala *Metal Gear Solid 4*! Even though it's closing soon. But *Ghost Recon* is out!

Gordon Mclean *Bomberman*! The greatest multiplayer game of all time.

Jim Churches *LittleBigPlanet* is the best for me. There's just so much to do. Play, create and share.



PLAY
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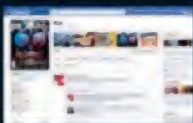
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Follow us @**PlayMag_UK**
No seriously, follow us. We give away games, we retweet stupid videos and we *will* talk to you. No seriously, we will. It's a miracle we manage to make a magazine each month



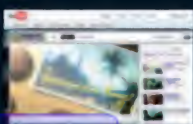
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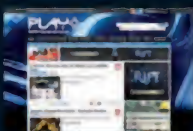
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Subscribe to our channel at www.youtube.com/PlayMagUK which has the latest trailers and funny(ish) videos we made ourselves



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Opinion, analysis and hilarity can be found on our website www.play-mag.co.uk so join the debate, tell us why we're wrong and make us cry a bit



Forum

Got something to talk about? Tell us on our forum: www.play-mag.co.uk/forum

Podcast

The **Play** team talks games every month
nowgamer.com/podcasts/nowgamer-podcasts/



SKYRIM ON THE LOO

Hi **Play**! I was wondering about your feeling on music in games. I don't mean the menu music you are forced to listen to as you try to play a game, but the music that, if correctly placed, can create a defining gaming moment. Many games blindly add music to any storyline mission and hope it fits in. Only a few games truly use music like this to share an emotion. *Heavy Rain* and *Mass Effect* create the most depressing piano rolls and put them in the exact right moment to truly make the player feel utterly depressed. Other games use well-placed music to create excitement, such as *Saints Row: The Third*'s mission Party Time adding a deliberately placed

Kanye West's *Power*. Even PSN games such as *Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath* use music in a run-for-your-life scene. What do you guys at **Play** think?

Reece Ward

Too many publishers lean on licensed music or have Jesper Kyd on speed dial without putting any real thought behind it. Good music adds to games immeasurably, yet it's so easily overlooked. A quick straw poll on **Play** shows our favourite examples are *Metal Gear Solid 3*, *Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory*, *Bayonetta*, *Mass Effect 3*, *Uncharted 3*, *Red Dead Redemption* and *Skyrim*. Play the *Skyrim* soundtrack next time you go for a number two. Beyond epic.



HEY, SQUARE ENIX

Hello, everyone at **Play**. Can you please tell those nice people at Square Enix that I care not one jot about anything they do or say, and will continue to have this stance until they announce a release date for *Final Fantasy X HD*?

Aron Baker

Hey, Square Enix. Aron Baker cares not one jot about anything you do or say, and will continue to have this stance until you announce a release date for *Final Fantasy X HD*.

NEW MAG SECTION

Hello, I have a brilliant idea for a new section in your magazine, 'Cooking with...'. You could have a new character each month, for example Cooking With Kratos: Chargrilled Minotaur or Cooking With Fat Princess: Cake.

Cooking is very popular at the moment. I'm sure adding this to your already brilliant magazine will increase the reader base.

Lloyd O'Brien

This is so brilliant that we don't know what else to add it except the only cooking we know how to do is those meals where you add hot water.

COMPETITION CORNER



We've recently moved across the office here at Imagine HQ, which you probably don't care about, but we found a lot of games to give away, so you probably care again. We could tell you that one of those games is *Bodycount*, so you won't care any more, and then we'll counter with one of those games being *Rayman Origins*, so you care again. And the other game is *Dragon's Dogma* and you don't know what to think but you're ready to answer the question because who cares?

WHAT IS DRAGON'S DOGMA?

A) A medical term for bad breath. B) An action RPG from Capcom. C) Chelsea striker.

Pop your answer and home address in an email to play@imagine-publishing.co.uk with the subject header 'Mate, I Properly Love Beenox, Yeah?'. Closing date is 2 August. The winner will be notified by email. Next month: free promotional tat. See you then!



You ask us questions, we reply on Twitter, then we reply here so everyone else can see, then you ask us more questions. Join in at @PlayMag_UK! Or don't...

@MR_MOOBS Do you feel that all these XP-based multiplayer games make the playing field uneven? Whatever happened to games like *Unreal*, etc?

They make it harder for newer players to compete because, inevitably, they don't have access to the same range of weapons, perks, killstreaks and whatever else. Publishers see XP as giving players an incentive to keep the game, which means they have a larger audience to buy DLC further down the line, so it's unlikely to change any time soon. But yes, we miss the days of those purist FPS games like *Unreal* and *Quake*...

@THEZJMAN In your 'very' honest opinion, do you think the Wii U will be a serious contender in the 'next-gen' console 'war'?

It won't be as successful as Wii and it won't compete with Sony and Microsoft in the same way Wii didn't directly go up against PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360. Different markets. It'll

do well but we're not sure how well nor how good the games will be, in the same way that PS3 and 360 had stronger games than Wii.

@KEWELL883 Is there going to be a new *Half-Life* coming soon?

Yes. Well, no. Sort of. There is a new *Half-Life* that's going to come out one day, but soon? Nope. Our advice is to get on with your life. Start saying yes. Tell that girl how you really feel. Take that holiday. *Live your life*.

@CHRIS1_9_80 Will there ever be an online co-op version on the PSN Store of *ToeJam & Earl*?

Unlikely. Straight-up ports don't have online functionality added to them, and those with online functionality have them removed, while a complete overhaul is unlikely to happen as Sega doesn't actually own the characters. Sega apparently approached the owner, Greg Johnson, to include them in *Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing*, but the fee being offered was considered

too low, so Johnson passed. That's the last snippet of *ToeJam & Earl* news we know of, unfortunately.

@PAUL_BOWLER Do you think there will ever be a *Resident Evil HD Collection*, and if there were, which *Resident Evil* games would you like to see in it?

Wouldn't surprise us in the slightest. As for our wish list, the *Resident Evil* GameCube remake, *Resident Evil 2* and 3 redone in a similar fashion, and *Resident Evil: Outbreak* with a revamped control system.

@SAMUELWROBERTS Do you think one of the unlockable characters in *All-Stars Battle Royale* will be a Nissan from *Gran Turismo*?

Only if there's enough room once all the *Battle Arena Toshinden* cast has been put in.

@PICTOPIRATE What is your favourite cheese-based snack? Lunchables.

HOME HAS FAILED

Hi, **Play!** Could you tell the people who work on PlayStation Home to bother doing stuff more, such as the fact that lots of people are annoyed with the basic 'Stop Here' walk line. I think they should put in better quality and much more people (such as my friends) would play PS Home more instead of just *Modern Warfare 3*, *FIFA Street* and *Batman: Arkham City* (great game).

I'm also annoyed about the fact that America and Japan are getting the best way before us. When I saw the 'Home Mansion' (available now in all regions *FINALLY*) I was trembling with



excitement, but when I had to wait a whole two frickin' years I completely lost interest! It's just ridiculous how long that took to come to our part of Europe and it goes to show that timing is extremely important when you make something as intriguing as the currently most expensive apartment in PS Home.

P.S. Don't tell [name of rival magazine] this, but I read **Play** way more than [name of rival magazine]! It has more things that everyone will want to look into.

Bye, your loving **Play** fan, me. Can't wait for *The Last Of Us*!
Kevin Deegan

The problem with PlayStation Home was its timing. It was supposed to hit alongside the *Second Life* phenomenon, but Home was delayed as that game's baffling popularity began to fade. It never really had a chance and that's why support for it today is pretty weak.

PLAY-MAG.CO.UK

PSN DEALS HINT AT BRIGHT(ER) FUTURE

PSN has recently received a batch of 'ultimate editions' in the US store, where games with all their DLC are available for cheaper prices than they would cost normally. What's that we smell? Is it the scent of something good happening? Why yes, yes it is. This is surely three things from Sony. It's an aggressive push to encourage people to buy digitally, thus using its store. It's a show of the benefits you get by being a PS

Plus subscriber, nabbing an extra 20 per cent discount over the normies, and it's an experiment – testing the water to see if deals like this really reap financial rewards for the company and the publishers involved. I say we show them it does so that, in future, they may well try it again. For cheaper. With even more games. ALL OF THE GAMES. CHEAP. SO CHEAP. And maybe they'll let us poor Europeans in on the action, too.

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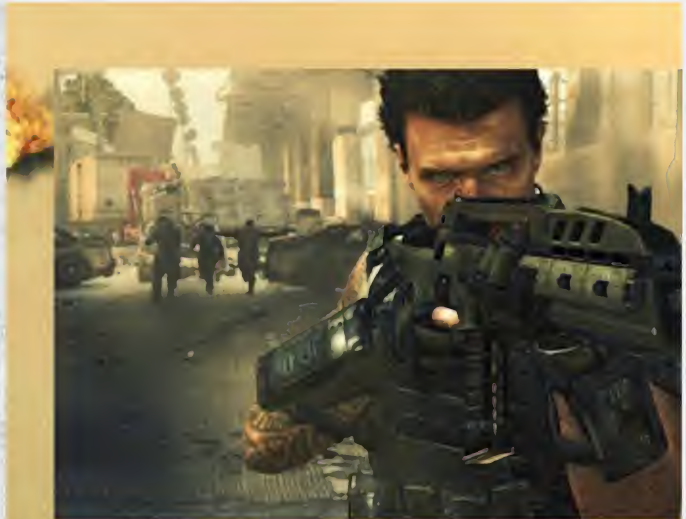
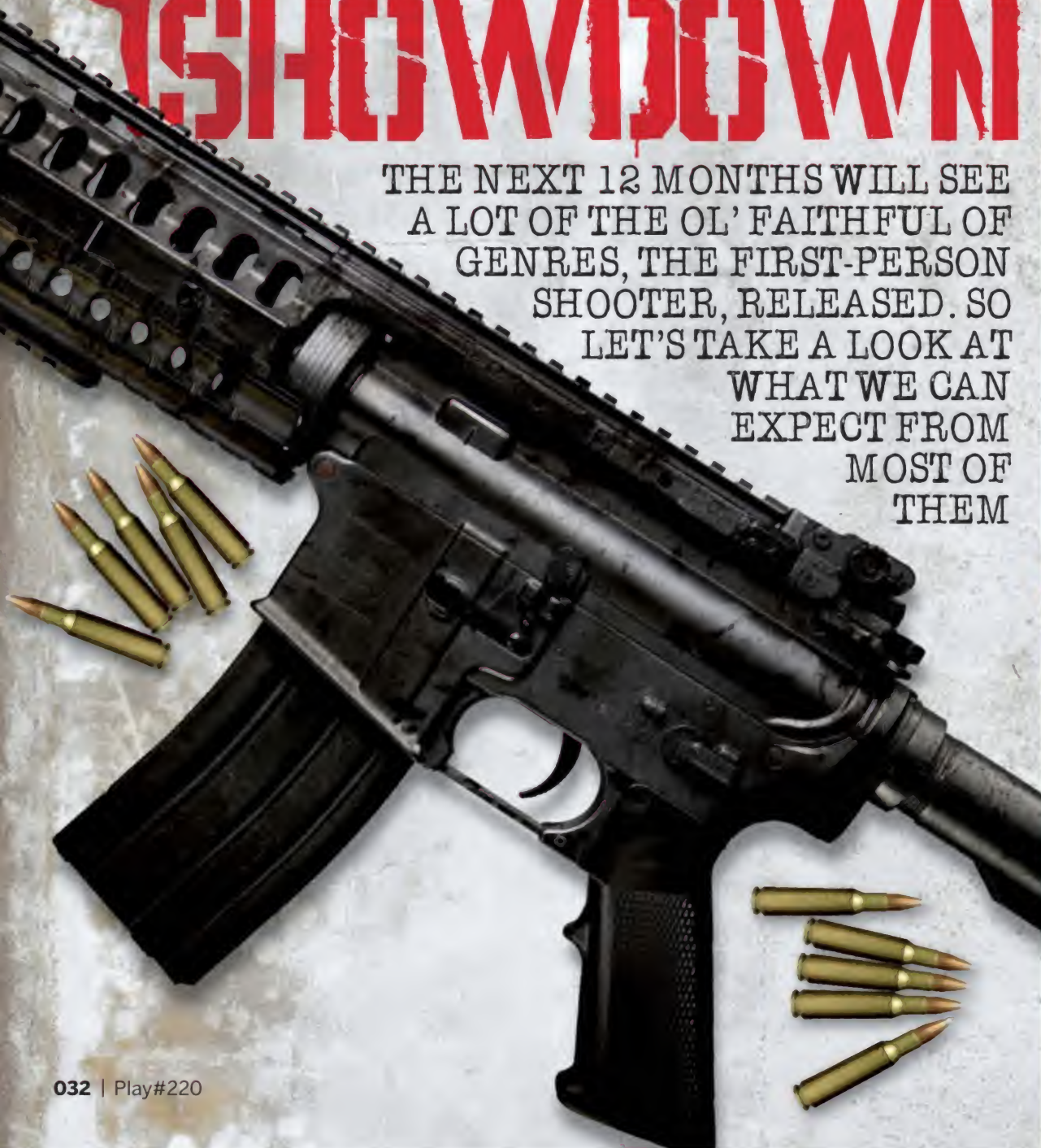
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THE GREAT FPS SHOWDOWN

THE NEXT 12 MONTHS WILL SEE A LOT OF 'THE OL' FAITHFUL OF GENRES, THE FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER, RELEASED. SO LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT WE CAN EXPECT FROM MOST OF THEM



● The expanded role for unmanned drones can mean only one thing: perks.

“ I think people are going to be excited to play an entirely new era ”

MARK LAMIA, STUDIO HEAD



Although the focus is on the near-future timeline, don't forget about the stuff set in the Eighties.

CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS II

RELEASE DATE: November

DEVELOPER: Treyarch

TRACK RECORD: *Call Of Duty: Black Ops*,
Call Of Duty: World At War, *Spider-Man 2*

UNIQUE STRENGTH:

World-dominating multiplayer

OVERVIEW: Treyarch's newest entry to the *COD* canon pushes new elements to the fore and offers features not yet seen in the series to date. At the same time, it doesn't change much, which is both a blessing and a curse. A new, futuristic setting – unmanned drones, x-ray sniper rifles and the like – makes for a refreshing setting for the game, but risks alienating a core fan base that likes traditional war, not sci-fi. At the same time, the cool new gadgets – shooting people through things is always great – and the fact that this, even with its branching decisions, updated looks and all the nips and tucks you would expect, is still very much *Call Of Duty*.

Will it be a tipping point? Will the combination of series fatigue and a traditionally unpopular sci-fi background be the straw to break this cash cow's back? Some will say yes, but we will say no. Activision knows how to do this right, Treyarch is no longer the *COD* series' B-team developer and, from what we've seen so far, *Black Ops II* will tick every single box it needs to tick. Evolution over revolution, and all that.

SP VS MP
SINGLE PLAYER MULTIPLAYER

WHO IT WILL APPEAL TO

■ *Call Of Duty* veterans, multiplayer fans

● Warfighter may be based in reality, but the realism comes second to gameplay, we're promised.



SP VS MP
SINGLE PLAYER MULTIPLAYER



“ We feel the game, the story, and the franchise is in the best place it has been in for a very long time ”

GREG GOODRICH, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

MEDAL OF HONOR: WARFIGHTER

RELEASE DATE: October

DEVELOPER: Danger Close

TRACK RECORD: *Medal Of Honor, Command & Conquer 3, GoldenEye: Rogue Agent*

UNIQUE STRENGTH:
Written by the soldiers it's about

OVERVIEW: It's not as arcadey as *Call of Duty*, not quite as realistic as *Battlefield*. That's the quick takeaway on *Medal Of Honor: Warfighter*, building on a solid-if-dull predecessor. Movement speed is lightning quick but health recharge is agonisingly slow. It's an awkward mix that's neither one nor the other, so we're hoping Danger Close tweaks the sliders to ensure we either have fast-paced gameplay or the slow-crawl of tense gunplay.

Multiplayer has handled by DICE for *Medal Of Honor*. Now, they've been shoved aside to make way for a confident Danger Close. We expected to smack our foreheads and start putting together a "BRING BACK DICE!!!" petition but Danger Close could pull this off. Each player has a partner to form a Fireteam, as opposed to the squads of *Battlefield 3*, and it's a far better system. Not just because there's a stronger sense of camaraderie (or anger at the sheer stupidity of your partner) but killing the player who shot your partner grants him an instant respawn. Smart. With different classes including British, Polish and Canadian, the international flavour to multiplayer deathmatch could set this up to be a surprise hit.

WHO IT WILL APPEAL TO

■ Those dissenting against *Call Of Duty*

SP VS MP

SINGLE PLAYER MULTIPLAYER



BORDERLANDS 2

RELEASE DATE: October

DEVELOPER: Gearbox Software

TRACK RECORD: *Borderlands, Duke Nukem Forever, Brothers In Arms*

UNIQUE STRENGTH: Billions of guns

OVERVIEW: The new classes of *Borderlands 2* don't do much to make us think, 'Wow, this is totally unlike anything we've ever played before', but they do a job of differentiating what were fairly similar classes in the first game. Which is a good thing. But that falls into irrelevance when you consider the fact that this is the return of the four-player FPS home to far too many guns for us to count. This time around, rather than just being slightly different and with a varying number attached, *Borderlands 2*'s guns will have more easily recognisable and defined characteristics, making the selection of them far more important and the ability to mix up your arsenal that bit easier to handle. Then there's the return of the same atmosphere – it's light-hearted, cartoony and altogether a lot of fun. Again. Which is good.

Concerns? Well, yes. It's not mixing up the formula in any huge way, and since there are plenty who never got on with the original in the first place, it could harm the sequel's performance as a result. But there are changes, tweaks and fun new ideas thrown in – plus it's been a few years now and, damn it, we want more *Borderlands*.

WHO IT WILL APPEAL TO

■ Those who want a co-operative FPS

“ Things can be funny, but they're also horrendously violent at the same time. It gives it this dark feel, but you can still laugh at it ”

KEVIN DUC, LEAD ARTIST

BIOSHOCK INFINITE

RELEASE DATE: February 2013

DEVELOPER: Irrational Games

TRACK RECORD: *BioShock*, *SWAT 4*, *System Shock 2*

UNIQUE STRENGTH: Creators of one of the generation's best FPSs behind it

OVERVIEW: We've seen the dead horses, the alternate *Star Wars* movie names, the changeable bodice size and those wonderful, hauntingly beautiful floating islands. But we still haven't seen the game in our hands, and by current estimates we're not going to see *BioShock Infinite* until next year.

On one hand this is an irritant, as it's something many of us have been looking forward to – a sequel to one of the best FPS games of this generation, some wonderful ideas, a great style and an interesting premise. On the other hand it's a good thing – as Ken Levine himself admitted, the delay was in order to add to the game and make things even better than we might have expected.

Sure, this does mean *Infinite* is at risk of getting hyped up far too much for its own good. Can it live up to the lofty expectations thrown its way? And will Move integration be revealed to be anything more than throwaway nonsense? We have nothing but faith in Irrational to make this the game we want it to be, but even so it's hard to maintain enthusiasm for this long, regardless of how stunning those set pieces look.

“We're not looking to create the hottest new tech demo. We're thinking more along the lines of, 'What do we need to sell this story of a floating world?'”

KEN LEVINE, CREATIVE DIRECTOR



WHO IT WILL APPEAL TO

■ Those wanting intelligence with their spectacle

SP VS MP
SINGLE PLAYER MULTIPLAYER



“We're taking the best experiences that we got from *Crysis 1* and *2*, and learning from them. Then we're combining them and hopefully avoiding the stuff that didn't work”

RASMUS HØJENGAARD,
DIRECTOR OF CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

CRYSIS 3

RELEASE DATE: February 2013

DEVELOPER: Crytek

TRACK RECORD: *Crysis*, *Crysis 2*, *Far Cry*

UNIQUE STRENGTH: Technological powerhouse

OVERVIEW: *Crysis 3* has a bow and arrow. Preview over.

You want more? Jeez. Okay, then. *Crysis 3* looks to combine the best of the first and second games to make something more appealing to... well, everyone. While the first game earned criticism for losing its way and reducing player freedom when the aliens turned up – as well as the shonky AI – and the second game was looked down on for being more linear than the first, for still having aliens and for being a glitchy little



blighter – as well as the shonky AI – the third looks to strip back those bad points and focus on what made both of its predecessors so good. Though there will still be aliens.

The freedom of the jungle is brought to the city that proved so linear last time around, and its all explorable and sneak-through-able in the traditional *Crysis* fashion. Your Nanosuit still has its powers and it's still up to the player how they go about approaching any given situation.

Bringing together the best of the other games and keeping it familiar could prove a masterstroke for *Crysis 3*, and it might finally be the utterly fantastic game the series has always threatened. Plus it has a bow and arrow.

WHO IT WILL APPEAL TO

■ Graphics whores, *Predator* enthusiasts >



FAR CRY 3

RELEASE DATE: September

DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Montreal

TRACK RECORD: Assassin's Creed, Rainbow Six: Vegas, Prince Of Persia

UNIQUE STRENGTH:

Massive exploration, massive insanity

OVERVIEW: We are getting to the point where we're being constantly confused by *Far Cry 3*. First it sounds great, then it looks stupid, then it plays well, then it ruins things by appearing linear, then it brings it back by covering interesting insanity elements, then it ruins life as we know it with the Insane Edition bobblehead. Then? Then it goes good again, when we see where it's actually going, when we listen to what the devs are trying to do and when we hear the announcement that the game will support four-player co-op.

It's still teetering between brilliance and, well, insanity, but the positives are overwhelming: a mature exploration of the effects of insanity, the effects of playing videogames on a person, the mature themes that go beyond the naked breasts in the trailer, the fact that you can hide in the massive archipelago's foliage with up to three other friends before stabbing someone with your massive machete – well, it wouldn't be a game without violence, after all. It just looks like Ubisoft is bringing it all together well, and *Far Cry 3* could be a lot better than we've so far given it credit for.

WHO IT WILL APPEAL TO

■ Those insane in the membrane

“We absolutely want to establish the gameplay core of you arrive on the scene and you have to devise a strategy or you're going to die”

JASON VANDENBERGHE, LEAD NARRATIVE DESIGNER



DISHONORED

RELEASE DATE: October

DEVELOPER: Arkane Studios

TRACK RECORD: BioShock 2 (design/art elements), Dark Messiah Of Might And Magic, Arx Fatalis

UNIQUE STRENGTH: Striking, beautiful style

OVERVIEW: Like *Deus Ex* and *Thief* before it, *Dishonored* is about choice. One mission sees you having to assassinate two members of parliament at a bath house. Stealth is based on vision cones, with a power that allows you to see those cones. The stealth playthrough sees you use 'Blink' teleport power to evade guards. You can then possess a fish (of course) to swim through a drainage tunnel and into the bath-house. Spying through keyholes allows you to

“It's a highly detailed, rich world that I love. It's not open-world. It's a linear collection of story missions, but within each mission it's highly non-linear”

HARVEY SMITH, CO-CREATIVE DIRECTOR



observe and eavesdrop but ultimately, you find one target in a steam room with a prostitute (mess with the valves, cook them alive!) and the other target by a ledge (use windgust, blow him to his death!). The cool thing is the target was possessed by you and walked to the ledge, with the power used in other interesting ways. For example, tumble from a ledge yourself and you can possess someone just before hitting the ground to save yourself.

The action playthrough? It centres around mastery of the 'Blink' teleport to stealth kill guards. There's even a nasty looking decapitation. Not as much fun as the creative stealth (again, see *Deus Ex*) but a perfectly valid option. Like we said, it's about choice. See?

WHO IT WILL APPEAL TO

■ Those wanting something a bit different



BEST OF THE BEST

IT'S NOT JUST THESE EIGHT;
THERE'S MORE FPS FUN A-COMING

ONE OF THE most interesting upcoming FPS games has to be CCP's **Dust 514**, bringing MMO PC players and PS3 gamers together... at last? The seemingly forgotten FPS version of 2K's **XCOM** is bringing a much-maligned – but probably quite good, ignoring the haters – version of less strategic alien shooting at some point. **Counter-Strike: Global Offensive** should fill the gap that hardcore FPS fans have needed filled since the failure of **MAG** and **SOCOM** to set the world afire, and we trust Valve. The ever-delayed **Aliens: Colonial Marines**, while being advertised at cinemas the world over, still isn't coming out until next year, even if we are finding it hard to wait. The other Gearbox shooter, **Brothers In Arms: Furious 4**, is another AWOL entry in recent months – but as soon as **Aliens** is out the door we do expect the WWII parody game to show itself again. Human Head Studios and Bethesda are both oddly quiet on the fate of **Prey 2**, with some saying “unsatisfactory quality” is to blame, while others hit on rumours of unpaid developers. Whatever the case, we're hopeful it'll be sorted out soon. **Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2** is one of the more surprising entries in the FPS genre, not because of what it is but what it looks like: beautiful. **Homefront 2**, still hopefully subtitled *Homefronter*, has gone radio silent since being announced a while back, but it's sure to pop up again once the focus is away from things like Crytek's own **Crysis 3**. The nostalgia gland is still being tickled by **007 Legends**, but we're worried about Eurocom helming the project. Finally, the return of the king: **Doom**. Bethesda's release of the **Doom 3 BFG Edition** will be the first time **Doom** has been seen on PS3 – and you know what that is? Absolutely brilliant.



“ We're always trying to look for ways to expand the interactivity, but not to the point that it brings the gameplay down too much ”

DEAN SHARPE, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER



METRO: LAST LIGHT

RELEASE DATE: October

DEVELOPER: 4A Games

TRACK RECORD: *Metro 2033*

UNIQUE STRENGTH:

A Ukrainian take on the genre

OVERVIEW: We didn't get *Metro 2033* in PlayStation Land, but its sequel, *Metro: Last Light*, is making its way to the Sony console. Quick primer: it's a tale of post-apocalyptic people living underground in the Moscow metro and keeping away from the surface, where things have gone a little bit wrong. Rich with atmosphere, capable of scares and throwing in enough supernatural elements to keep you on your toes, *Last Light* is unlikely to be your usual run-and-gun blaster.

Take, for example, the returning scavenging and bartering elements. Bullets are valuable. Gas masks are an absolute necessity. Both are quite rare – you will need to trade for them, making them feel even more valuable than they would otherwise be. A small part on paper, a big

part in practice and just one way in which *Last Light* stands out from the crowd.

The focus of *Last Light* shies away from multiplayer so much that the devs aren't even talking about it yet. Cynical minds would expect it to be something slapped on simply to tick a box. We are cynical minds, but we're willing to be proven wrong.

Whatever happens, if it's even half as atmospheric as *Metro 2033*, *Last Light* will grab itself a hell of a lot of fans.



WHO IT WILL APPEAL TO

■ Survival horror fans, S.T.A.L.K.E.R. players

WATCH DOGS



ASSASSIN'S CREED MEETS DEUS EX MEETS SPLINTER CELL MEETS HITMAN

WATCH DOGS

UBISOFT'S LATEST SENSATION HAS GOT THE VIDEOGAME INDUSTRY ALL EXCITED LIKE. BUT WHAT REALLY LIES BENEATH ITS CYBER-THRILLER EXTERIOR, AND ARE THERE WARNING SIGNS ALREADY?





WATCH DOGS

What do you get if you cross *Assassin's Creed*, *Deus Ex*, *Splinter Cell* and *Hitman*, with a dash of *Grand Theft Auto*? *Watch Dogs*, Ubisoft's latest open-world adventure with more than a hint of conspiracy about it, and it's the talk of videogames at the moment. Ubisoft has impressed the industry recently thanks to strong showings of both its latest IP and other franchises, but the French third-party powerhouse has outdone itself here. No doubt there were many waiting for a modern day *Assassin's Creed*. They won't have to wait long now.

Unveiled to a press bombarded with a deluge of sequels, muddled peripherals and deathly dull corporate willy-waving, *Watch Dogs* reminded us why we love new IP reveals, especially when they're of this quality.

Players take on the role of Aiden Pearce, a covert operator of some description with a special skill: he's able to commandeer various electronically controlled interfaces and devices, using them to achieve his goals. In *Watch Dogs*' world, the entire city is not only connected but also controlled by the ctOS, a central computer program. Obviously the people who created this have never seen *The Terminator*, because if they had they'd know what a colossal security risk that is if someone finds a way to exploit it. Which, obviously, is exactly what happens. An early example is Aiden deliberately frying a doorman's mobile phone connection so he has to step outside in a vain attempt to get a signal; in doing so, Aiden can slip into the theatre unnoticed and proceed with his mission.

AIDEN PEARCE, A COVERT OPERATOR OF SOME DESCRIPTION WITH A SPECIAL SKILL: HE'S ABLE TO COMMANDEER VARIOUS ELECTRONICALLY CONTROLLED INTERFACES AND DEVICES

He's out to eliminate the man responsible for the exhibition being shown in the theatre: media mogul Joseph DeMarco. Roaming the floor, Aiden uses his smartphone to gather data on everyone in the room. Profiling the unaware crowd, he knows their occupations, their successes, their failures, their health issues, their financial statuses. More pressingly, he also knows that DeMarco has been acquitted of a murder he had actually committed.

Very high-tech, but Aiden also isn't above good old human intelligence-gathering. Dressed in what looks like a *Blade Runner*-style overcoat and unremarkable baseball cap, he appears every inch your standard private investigator. Well, until he starts battering hired bodyguards via a mixture of impressive martial arts skills and a telescopic baton, that is.

Talking to his contact – a well-dressed Asian man with strong underworld vibes – with whom Aiden shares a testy relationship, our antihero reveals his plan: draw DeMarco out using himself as bait, and close the trap when he arrives. It's a plan that Aiden's contact decries as unsophisticated, but it's anything but. With DeMarco's associate and event planner Mary Blass spooked into calling her boss, he takes the bait, announcing that he'll be there in a minute.



As with every other game made these days, *Watch Dogs* features a lot of shooting.

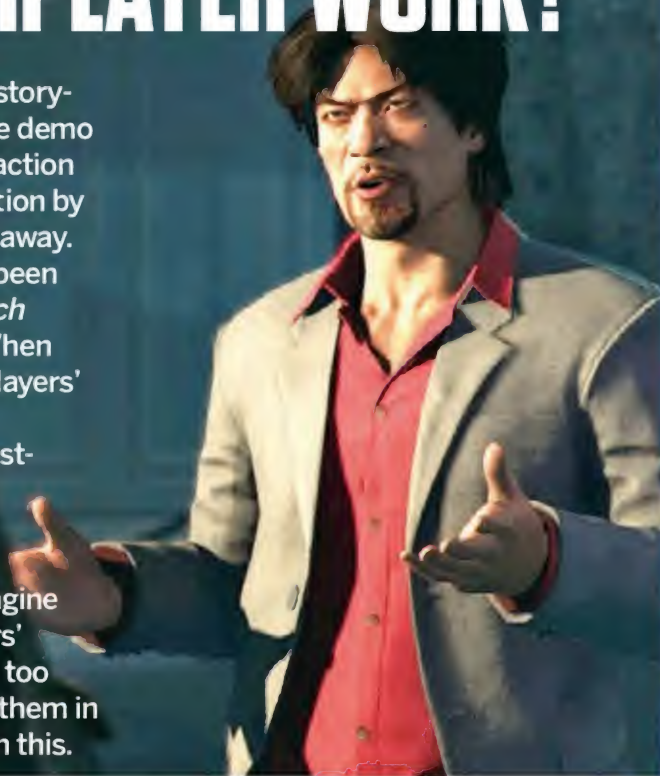
HOW WILL MULTIPLAYER WORK?

WATCH DOGS AIMS TO CHANGE CO-OP

Although it seems at first glance to be very story-driven, *Watch Dogs* is in fact multiplayer. The demo we saw had another player overlooking the action unfolding below, diverting the police's attention by any means necessary so that Aiden can get away.

Apart from that piece of info, Ubisoft has been pretty tight-lipped, but, like a lot else in *Watch Dogs*, it's a premise with a lot of potential. When you combine the ability to influence other players' games without being anywhere near them, physically or otherwise, you've got, in the best-case scenario, the makings of a constantly evolving, dynamic playground.

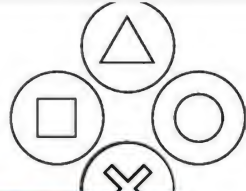
In the worst case you've got a nice little playground for mucking around in. We'd imagine that you couldn't just jump into other players' games as the potential for griefing is simply too hilariously awesome; more that you'll invite them in for good or ill. We'll be keeping a close eye on this.



After escaping the theatre, Aiden waits for DeMarco's arrival at a busy intersection. When the mark arrives on the scene, Aiden manually changes the traffic lights, causing a huge pile-up. It's here where the *GTA* influence kicks in: a large gunfight between the player and DeMarco's security services breaks out, killing an innocent woman in the process. The resultant shootout resembles *GTA IV* in its cover and over-the-shoulder shooting, but is far more dynamic; slow-mo enables Aiden to land headshots, and he rolls across car bonnets, delivering death before his feet hit the ground.

DeMarco is the next to literally bite the bullet, ruthlessly executed before Aiden exits the scene in a stolen car, hacking a bridge and lifting it to provide both a ramp and an obstacle for his pursuers. End demo, cue anxious waiting.

Gameplay-wise, what's there is familiar, but it's well executed and engaging. Story-wise, however, *Watch Dogs* is aiming to make a point about the way we live now: a morally grey character hacking into the mechanics of our daily lives isn't a new plot device, but with our actual and digital selves becoming more and more intertwined, it is a prescient point. Aiden talks of a 'digital shadow', cast by all of us as we navigate the internet, and of using them against their owners.



CAN I PLAY IT ON MY IPAD?

**REMOTELY DICTATING
PLAY VIA YOUR APP STORE**

Ah, the future. When have you let us down? (Well, apart from the jet pack thing, but we'll let that slide.) Nicely positioning itself to take advantage of the current vogue for additional touchscreen gameplay, *Watch Dogs* is going to let you influence in-game events via a mobile app.

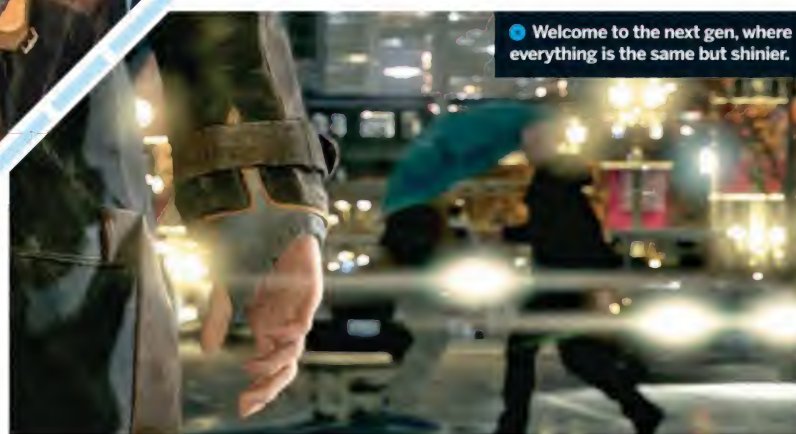
There will be a wireframe display of the city, which you can then dig deeper into, zooming to landmarks and other places of interest. The app is very strategic in its implementation; like in the old *Rainbow Six* games, you can use it to review floor plans, study entry and exit points for buildings, and give you the edge when you drop back into the game.

Information can also be pushed from game to app. As scanning people is all-important, it makes sense for this information to be visible outside of the game. Simply run the rule over someone, push it to the app, and then review the in-depth data to give you the upper hand when you return to the game. If it works like Ubisoft says, this will be brilliant.



Sony certainly knows all about that, thanks to the PSN hacking scandal, and it's something that most of us will have been subjected to in the past, even if it's just a lost Hotmail account. The idea that someone knows everything about you is terrifying; the knowledge that it can be abused even more so. And Aiden does seem to know everything about everyone in the game's interpretation of Chicago.

How far Ubisoft's depiction of the sprawling Midwestern metropolis will go in terms of breadth is still up for debate, but the developer appears to have got the small scale things right, from the drops of rain to the street markings. The Windy City is rendered in impressive detail, both in draw distance and building geography. It's so impressive, in fact, that many people started to ask whether what we've seen is actually console footage. >



THE IDEA THAT SOMEONE KNOWS EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU IS TERRIFYING; THE KNOWLEDGE THAT IT CAN BE ABUSED EVEN MORE SO. AND AIDEN DOES SEEM TO KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT EVERYONE IN THE GAME'S INTERPRETATION OF CHICAGO



WILL IT RUN ON PS3?

THAT DEMO? RUNNING ON PC, BUT DON'T DESPAIR

With no new machines set to be revealed this year, it turned to the developers, not the platform holders, to show the masses what their games will look like when the next generation inevitably arrives. A lot of games at the show were running on high-end PC hardware, the assumption being that the next round of machines will be roughly comparable to this standard.

It's a pretty big assumption to make on our part, all told, but in the face of the sort of super-secrecy that would make governments blush, we're going to do it. The good news is that the next gen looks pretty sweet. The bad news is that, unless *Watch Dogs* is coming out exclusively on PS3 and is co-developed by Ubisoft, Naughty Dog and John Carmack himself, it won't look the same on the triple.

The best news is, as a console reaches the end of its life, that's when developers really tap its power. *Watch Dogs* will look good, no doubt about that.



The obvious answer is, of course, no. Don't be silly. Like a lot of games revealed this year, including the gorgeous *Star Wars 1313*, *Watch Dogs* was running on a high-end PC when first shown, one no doubt groaning with 16 graphics cards and 4 gallons of RAM. It raises one big question: how good will it actually look when it comes to PS3?

Pretty good, we can confidently say. PS3 is a beast, but only in the right hands and with the right budget. This generation has been tarnished somewhat by Sony's baby only really getting a thorough run-out when exclusives are involved. It's unlikely that the PS3 version will look as good as what we've seen here, but it will look lovely.

We can live with that, to be honest. What it might not have is as advanced physics and AI as a potential next-gen version, which would be a shame. The days of massive jumps in graphical fidelity are gone, replaced with more sophisticated systems and mechanics. Plenty of games straddled the divide between this gen and the previous one the last go around – *Gun*, *Hitman: Blood Money* and *Tomb Raider: Legend*, to name

a few – and we expect *Watch Dogs* to do the same: slightly compromised, but hopefully not too much.

Speaking of next-gen tech, no discussion of *Watch Dogs* is complete without mentioning the potential for playing it outside of the main game. Everyone and their dog has got an iWhatever now, and the logical extension of making a game where the lead character hacks with his smartphone is to make an actual app that enables players to interact with the game without playing it. Thankfully, Ubisoft agrees.

The firm has committed to such an idea in a big way. Using a tablet, you'll be able to see an overview of the game's play area. From here, you can then influence proceedings as you see fit: hacking, teaming up with other players, generally being a bit of a tit, if that's what you want.

The potential is staggering, and *Watch Dogs* is pointing towards a future of asymmetric gameplay just as much as Nintendo's new toy is. For years, we on **Play** have wanted to be able to play a game at home, then take it on the move. Granted, *Watch Dogs*' take on this isn't as fully fledged as that, as you can't

expect your average tablet to push that level of graphical fidelity. You can expect it to be able to impact the game in meaningful ways, however, and we're genuinely excited about what's on offer. We'd be even more so if there was Remote Play via Vita...

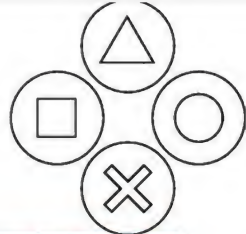
Regardless, there's plenty to celebrate here. Ubisoft Montreal – the studio behind *Assassin's Creed*, of course – has been working on the IP since 2010, and although we've only seen a brief snippet of the game, it's got us very excited indeed. It's not out until next year, but in the meantime there are a host of unanswered questions to sift through.

First among many is the nature of Aiden's moral compass, and whether this will be a deliberate gameplay mechanic. In the demo, it must be said, it all seems a bit skewed. Firstly he causes a multi-car collision, by proxy killing a woman who gets caught in the crossfire, but then he rescues her panicked husband. He's also not above coldly executing a man via close-range headshot, nor a cheeky bit of grand theft auto. But then again, he appears to only be killing DeMarco because he was wrongly acquitted.

The *Deus Ex* vibe is strong, of course, given the subject matter and technology. Could it also be that *Watch Dogs* will enable players to go their own way when it comes to getting the job done?

Just before the intersection crash that kicks off the gunplay, Aiden's tech wheel shows a variety of options available to him. These include the aforementioned lifting





THE INFLUENCE BEHIND WATCH DOGS

X ASSASSIN'S CREED

UI, PACING

It's no real surprise that *Watch Dogs* is from the same studio that built *Assassin's Creed*. The user interface is Ubisoft through and through, mixing minimal design with intricate, minute detail. More importantly, the pace is *Assassin's Creed* too, with the slow, stalking build-up punctuated with explosions of action.

X SPLITTER CELL

GUNPLAY, GADGETS

While Sam Fisher was once a man armed with nothing more than shadows and neck-snapping forearms, *Splinter Cell* has nudged the grizzled hero towards gadgetry and guns. That's echoed in *Watch Dogs*, where Aiden can jam mobile phones and switch off traffic lights, switching to tight, disciplined gunplay in tricky situations.

X DEUS EX

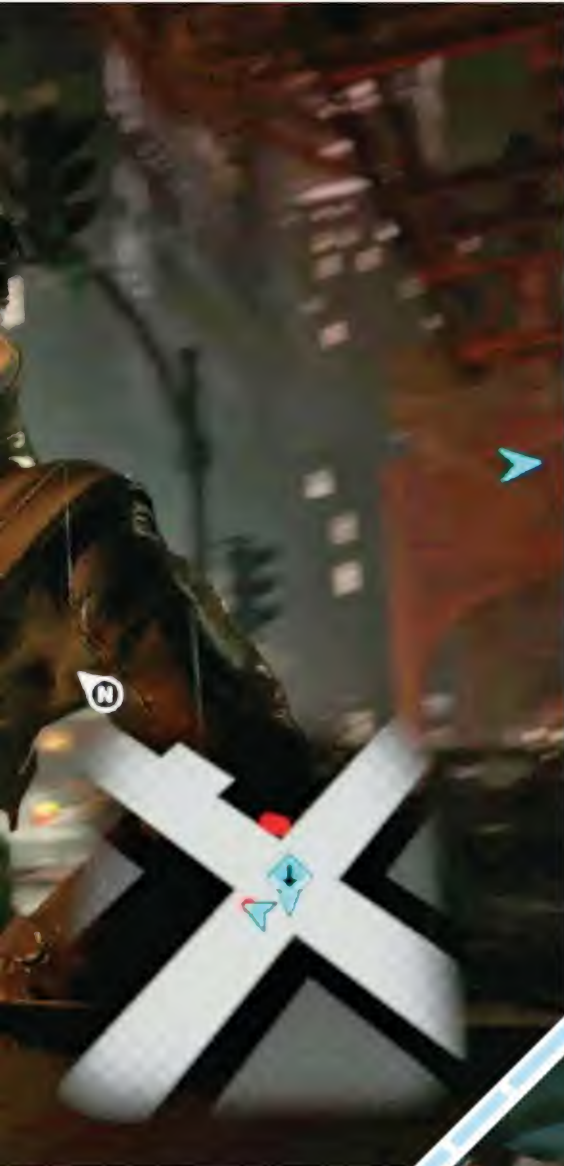
TECHNOLOGY THEMES, AESTHETIC

Watch Dogs is shaping up to be about technology in a human world and how it changes our lives, leading to inevitable abuse of that power. *Deus Ex* touched upon that theme too. At an entirely shallow level, both feature nightclubs with fancy lighting, character models that look similar and a grungy colour scheme.

X HITMAN

HUNTING TARGETS, CREATING ACCIDENTS

Both *Hitman* and *Watch Dogs* share that ethos of tracking down targets, although it remains to be seen if Aiden's mission in the demo is just a one-off. Likewise, there are differences – *Hitman* was about making your kills look like accidents, while *Watch Dogs* is creating them as a means to an end – but the similarities are intriguing.



• The demo is unflinchingly violent at times. This guard gets battered. Real horror show.



• The GTA influence is obvious. Even the number plate nearly references it.

IS THIS THE FIRST PS4 GAME?

MICHAEL PACHTER THINKS SO.

Watch Dogs looked so good when Ubisoft crashed E3 with its stunning reveal that people began losing their minds and shouting things like, "Good Lord! This must be a PlayStation 4 title!"

Adding to the confusion, Ubisoft initially didn't actually say what formats *Watch Dogs* was destined for, and then it was found out that the demo was running on a high-end PC, allowing the PS4 chatter to grow in volume.

Ubisoft would then go on to say that yes, *Watch Dogs* is coming to PS3, but there's been no denial that it's due for next-gen platforms either. Analyst Michael Pachter is convinced it will be. So are we. So have we all seen the first PS4 title in action?

of the bridge – is it possible to trap or kill DeMarco this way, we wonder? And if so, will we get branching storylines? What if you *don't* kill him?

And how does all of this tie in to the confirmed multiplayer mode? If people can drop in and out of your game, how will progression and mission structure work?

Like we said, the potential is all there. If there's a strong, character-driven narrative at the centre of it all then it's likely that *Watch Dogs*' multiplayer component will be, again, asymmetric, with players helping or hindering each other for their own ends. If not, however – as unlikely as this seems – the stage is set for a possible revolution in the way open worlds are populated and policed.

It all sounds quite ambitious, to be fair. And coming back to earth for a moment,

there are concerns over the demo's contrivances. What sort of bouncer leaves his post to take a call, and wouldn't the queue of high-society people waiting to get in start complaining about a grubby-looking interloper walking straight in? And where were the police when the shooting started? They did turn up later, but you'd imagine a gunfight with automatic weapons in the middle of Chicago might draw some more attention.

The answer is probably that the entire scene was composed for the demo, with maximum tension and action being the focus. These are minor complaints; as long as *Watch Dogs* gets the balance between action and strategy right, and enables players to come up with elaborate, emergent play styles, then it's going to be an absolute smash, guaranteed. ☒

“WE MUST
DRAW THE
PLAYER
INTO A
NIGHTMARE”



● Masachika Kawata has been working on *Resident Evil* for over a decade.



RESIDENT EVIL 6 IS CHARGED WITH BRINGING FORMER GLORIES BACK TO THE ONCE-DOMINANT SERIES. BUT CAN HORROR AND ACTION CO-EXIST? WE NAB AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH CAPCOM PRODUCER **MASACHIKA KAWATA**, THE MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THINGS *RESIDENT EVIL*, TO GET THE ANSWER RIGHT FROM THE ZOMBIE'S MOUTH



● It's Chris and Leon! In the same game! But are they on the same side?

RESIDENT EVIL 6

It's a moment fresh in the memories of everyone who played it. The brown door slowly creaked open and you stood in a hallway with patterned wallpaper and a beige carpet that would make your grandmother turn her nose up in embarrassed disgust. You gently pushed forward, with your stilted gun-held-up-by-head animation, before breaking out into a full trot because there was no dang—CRASH! A skinless dog hurled itself through the nearby window as *Resident Evil* players all over the world soiled their pants in fright, catapulting their pads in the air and falling backwards over the sofa.

Time hasn't been kind to *Resident Evil*'s iconic horror scene – watching that skinless terror, it seems more like a dark blanchmange in a dog costume wobbling towards you – but this was survival horror at its finest. 'Survival horror at its finest' is something that has since been lost as *Resident Evil* progressed. *RE4* reinvented the stale series by putting the camera just past your shoulder whatever you did, the new viewpoint allowing Capcom to beef up the gunplay and action without the player feeling frustrated and unable to compete with the waves of zombies.

Yet the horror was lost and was further massaged out with *Resident Evil 5*, thanks to the introduction of

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Sheva, an AI partner who served as a vehicle for co-op and stealing your health sprays. "The combination of loaded action sequences and pedestrian environments result in a relatively scare-free experience," we said in issue 177, possibly while stroking our chins, but who really remembers nowadays? "The game edges the series closer to the action-adventure genre than ever before," we continued. So, we ask *Resident Evil*

overlord Masachika Kawata, is horror still important for the series?

"Horror is, of course, at the core of any *Resident Evil* game," he explains. "As fictional horror universes go, *Resident Evil* is relatively grounded in reality in that it doesn't feature ghosts or other such supernatural phenomena. The world of each game is presented in a way that feels real, and the heroes and heroines of each game also feel authentic. It's the

synthesis of these elements that lets players dive into the story and feel that they are the main character, that they are a part of the world."

So yes, is the quick answer. The problem that survival horror games have is that the archaic mechanics that were often labelled as clunky or outdated – stiff movement, awkward combat, limited ammo – are what made them scary, as they're what made you vulnerable. You couldn't defend yourself properly, so there was a real menace to everything you faced.

"Survival horror has traditionally been about restricting the player's freedom in order to effect tension," continues Kawata. "Limited inventory slots, sparse ammo and the like certainly contribute to a feeling of fear and helplessness, but what was a novel experience when the genre got started got frustrating over the years. Action elements have started to come to the fore in survival horror as a way of easing players' frustrations with those limitations. We designed *Resident Evil: Revelations* to blend classic survival horror exploration with a faster action style, and the overwhelmingly positive press and consumer reaction to that title has, I think, proven that a game with faster action can remain true to the *Resident Evil* spirit." >

● The prospect of fighting old-fashioned zombies is somehow comforting.



WHAT ELEMENTS MAKE UP RESIDENT EVIL?

Andy Santos, game director on *Operation Raccoon City*, shares insight on how Slant Six ensured its multiplayer shooter felt like a *Resident Evil* game

ATMOSPHERE

"With the Raccoon City setting, we went to great lengths to re-create the atmosphere found in the original games such as the dark tone, flickering lights, fires and so on. The icing on the cake was the score composed by Capcom Japan."

CONSISTENT PLOT

"Playing the old games once again further developed *Operation Raccoon City*'s plot. Playing *Resident Evil 2* and *3*, you start asking questions such as: are there more T-103 Tyrants in the city? What happened in the dead factory? Why is Mr X chasing after Sherry? How are the BOWs programmed? As fans of the series, we eagerly discussed these questions with Capcom. The result of these discussions became story beats for the player to experience."

NO RUN AND GUN

"For *Operation Raccoon City*, it was imperative that *Resident Evil*'s mechanics were present. Despite being able to move and shoot, you have to stop to shoot accurately."

PERSISTENT HEALTH

"In *Resident Evil*, the health bar is persistent, as opposed to the current trend of regenerative health, so the player has to seek out health items."

EVERYTHING MUST FIT

"There were plenty of ideas and plenty of them were dropped because they didn't fit in with *Resident Evil*'s lore."



● *Resident Evil 6* is showing signs of both *Resi 5*-style action and traditional horror.

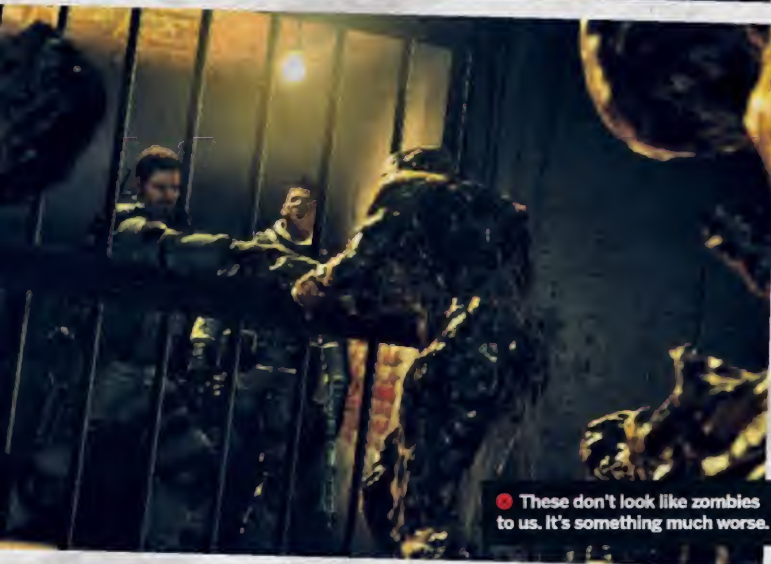


> **K**awata won't be working on *Resident Evil 6*, though. *Dragon's Dogma* producer Hiroyuki Kobayashi is heading up this project, and Kawata admits he's not too keyed in on what the team will be doing for the sixth numbered outing in the series. Still, he co-produced *Resident Evil 5* and *Resident Evil: The Umbrella Chronicles* before taking the reins for *Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City*, *Resident Evil: The Mercenaries* and *Resident Evil: Revelations*. He knows exactly what makes the series tick.

"Scariness is essential, but ultimately, these are games, so it's important not to focus on the fear factor to the extent that it gets in the way of the gameplay," he tells us. "In saying that, it's a lot of fun for us to invent scary situations and ways to draw the player into a nightmare of our own creation. That aspect of the games must be part of the reason why the series has been so successful."

Resident Evil 6 will be split into three distinct parts. Chris Redfield's third of the game will continue the action direction of the series, focusing on gunplay and armed foes while introducing third-person shooter mechanics such as cover fire. That will have the mass-market appeal and no doubt dominate the advertising when Capcom starts to crank up the hype for *Resident Evil 6*.

Another third of the game falls to Jake Mercer, the man referred to as "Wesker Junior" by Ada Wong, and also the man who brings a new brand of brutality to the series via his melee attacks. His co-op partner is Sherry Birkin, last seen as a young girl in *Resident Evil 2*, and the gameplay involving the duo seems to have a large focus on running away and escaping enemies. This is something that *Resident Evil 5* attempted in its *Lost In Nightmares* DLC,



● These don't look like zombies to us. It's something much worse.

with its near-unbeatable Guardian of Insanity enemy. *Lost In Nightmares* was the one bit of content in *Resident Evil 5* that brought back nerve-shredding tension and real fear, so it's good to see Capcom building on its experiment.

But it's the third of the game headed by Leon Kennedy that we're most excited about.

The reveal trailer kicked off with Leon trudging through dimly lit, gothic corridors, which is about as close to *Resident Evil 4* as you'd imagine Capcom would dare to swing without invoking accusations of being lazy or whatever the internet troll insult of choice is right now. It was a deliberate move to show that Leon's side of the game will echo the horror of old. Even though he has co-op partner Helena Harper in tow, which could mean she punctures the taut atmosphere with her clumsy AI in the same way Sheva did, we're sure Capcom has learnt from its mistakes. *Resident Evil 6* is by far the biggest game it has, and it won't mess this up.

This all leaves us with one final question for Kawata. We've seen *Resident Evil* lightgun games in the past thanks to *Survivor*, along with an online co-op spin-off before online became big on consoles in *Outbreak*, and *Operation Raccoon City* attempted a team deathmatch slant. Is there any genre that won't work for *Resident Evil*?

"While I like to think that we could rise to the challenge of making a spin-off *Resident Evil* title in any genre, I don't see the numbered series deviating into that kind of territory," he answers. "The changes introduced to the main series since *Resident Evil 4* have done enough to keep it fresh and exciting. Still, with the 15th anniversary of the series approaching, I suppose we can't rule anything out!"

Resident Evil Karting confirmed? You heard it here first. Bagsie Jill! ☒



THE GREATEST RESIDENT EVIL MOMENTS



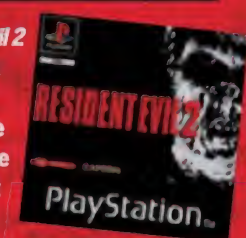
DOGS THROUGH WINDOW

Stands tall as not only the greatest moment in the series but arguably in gaming, as the dogs crashing through the window signalled the arrival of the survival horror genre. With discussion of gaming taking off on the internet for the first time – GameFAQs was one year old when *Resident Evil* came out – discussion of the moment and, more importantly, how people reacted to it spread like wildfire. Yet to be topped by any survival game, *Resident Evil* included.



RACCOON CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

Resident Evil took place inside a mansion, but *Resident Evil 2* saw Capcom broaden its horizons, as the zombie outbreak had spread to the streets of Raccoon City. The reality was that the majority of the game may as well have taken place inside a mansion, given how much of it was indoors, but the moment you arrived at Raccoon City Police Department, it truly felt like a city-wide, sweeping horror.



NEMESIS ATTACKS

Not so much a single moment as a single gameplay mechanic, with the Nemesis stalking you for the entire game. It changed the pacing entirely, disrupting the staccato stop-start of *Resident Evil* and its sequel for something that had you continuously on edge. A smart way to change up the formula, every time Nemesis crashed into the game it was tense, it was frightening and it was brilliant.



KRAUSER KNIFE FIGHT

He's easily the most memorable *Resident Evil* villain beyond Wesker, and the best showdown with Krauser came on a steel platform when you went knife-to-knife with the muscular mess of steroids and war paint. This is arguably as good as QTEs have ever been, and will ever be – every button press had its place and correlated to exactly what was happening on screen.



BOULDER PUNCHING

Perhaps not the greatest moment but definitely the most memorable. The final battle with Wesker took place inside a volcano, with the Chris and Sheva partnership being split up by crumbling rocks. Sheva ends up dangling just above lava and Chris needs to jump across to save her... but there's a boulder in the way. Chris pushes it. No good. Chris leans into it. No good. So Chris punches it! Of course!





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PREVIEWS

The games that define the future of PlayStation



RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY 2013

Dead Space 3

● The wonderful *Dead Space* HUD, which few seem to want to copy, returns.

On land, no one can hear you scream. Because it's in a snowstorm

PS3

It would be tragically inevitable if it weren't for the fact that we really are big fans of the *Dead Space* series. We all knew a third game would rear its head at some point; it was just a question of 'when' rather than 'if'. Normally we'd get all uppity about this, decrying the industry for a lack of creativity and over-reliance on sequels to established franchises.

But then, just... look at it.

Dead Space 3 takes Isaac Clarke, the mentally unhinged protagonist of the previous two *Dead Space* titles, and dumps him on the planet of Tau Atlantis. This ice planet – the rumours were true, then – isn't the only place you'll visit during the course of the game, but it's what Visceral has been keen to show off so far. Why is Isaac there? We're not sure. Is he alone? Absolutely not, for three very good reasons.

First of all, there are the Necromorphs. Your companions in this world of horror. Where would we be without them? France, probably. But they're back, there will be new horrors to face, and you are likely to continue being unnerved by how weirdly they move and how quickly they attack. The gits.

Your second, new, reason is the addition of human enemies. These guys are Unitologists – the religious zealots referred to a lot in *Dead Space*'s lore, but never directly fought like this before. What this means for the combat in the game is a few things, but most noticeably the fact that players will now have to get their heads down. Yes, *Dead Space 3* has adopted cover. But Visceral is going to pains to make sure this isn't out of place; that it doesn't ruin the flow or stop the player from doing what they've got

themselves used to doing in the last two games. This means no 'sticky' cover – you're free to walk or run away from it as you please, so no irritating instances of unavoidable death at the hands of those enemies less prone to using cover.

The third of our wonderful reasons is a biggie: the addition of drop-in/drop-out co-op. No longer do you have to face the horrors of the warped flesh on your lonesome, as you can be accompanied by a second person in your adventures. It's another area that requires balancing, and not just from a storyline perspective – is your partner merely a conjuration of Isaac's melted brain? – but based on how you actually play the game. *Dead Space* has so far been a series about panicking the player; putting them under a lot of pressure. Adding a single other pair

of gun-carrying arms to the mix tips the balance a great deal, lessening panic, reducing scares and leaving you feeling like this is no longer a true *Dead Space* experience. Visceral knows this. Visceral is making sure this isn't the case. We hope it's successful.

But there are always other ways to scare and to keep the experience fresh and exciting. The different enemy factions – human and alien – are fought by the player, but are they fought by each other? That would mix things up suitably, we have to say. Then there's the planet – almost a character in itself – being used as a tool by the developers. It's a frozen world of low visibility, dangerous terrain, confusing audio and lots of other ingredients that can make for something both different and yet still familiarly threatening.

It's early days and we haven't seen much yet, but it's looking promising. And we know Visceral knows its stuff. Put this in the 'we're looking forward to you' pile, thanks. >

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- *Dead Space* was great. *Dead Space 2* was great. This is more *Dead Space*.
- Co-op isn't just being slapped in with no extra thought.
- Human enemies... are... hmm. Nah, we're not sold on that yet.
- We still get all hot under the collar about how pretty this series is. Sorry.

READ ME

Dead Space 3's executive producer, Steve Papoutsis, was a founding member of the band No Use For A Name. Their best song is *International You Day*, released long after he left. Oh well.

Dead Space 3 is being developed by Visceral Games. Check out www.deadspace.ea.com for more details.





● Isaac and his new co-op partner, John Carver. No, really.



● There's a lot of action but what about the horror? Hmm.



● He's frozen stiff! Ho ho ho. Get it? Ho ho ho! We're funny.

INSIDE-OUT

Agoraphobia > claustrophobia

IT'S NATURAL TO be concerned when a game moves from its traditional setting to one not explored before, in this case the snowy wastes of Tau Atlantis. But Visceral – and senior producer David Woldman in particular – is well aware of this: “We have a lot more flexibility to play with in our new setting when you think about various depths of visibility, various thicknesses of snow, what the environment does to your ability to move through the space, to aim in that space – lots of really creative and innovative things that we can do that we couldn’t have done previously.” And that’s you told.

“WE WANT PINK ELEPHANTS. LET’S PUT PINK ELEPHANTS IN THE GAME”



STEVE PAPOUTSIS
executive producer,
Visceral Games

Steve Papoutsis, executive producer on *Dead Space 3* at Visceral Games, wouldn’t leave us alone. So we graciously granted him this opportunity to talk about the game, the co-op and pink elephants. Aren’t we nice?

What have been your influences for *Dead Space 3*?

Any kind of inspiration we’ve taken has come out of the team and what we’ve got excited about. And when you think about a snowy ice planet, there’s a lot of interesting things you can do there – the low visibility, the freezing conditions, the interesting terrain, and for us, the really drastic change of what *Dead Space* has looked like in the past and what this one location of many in *Dead Space 3* will allow us to develop and

deliver for our players. So really it’s come out of what would be very different yet feel really threatening and create the sense of survival. And that location, the idea of a frozen planet, was really appealing to us.

What’s exciting to you about co-op?

With co-op we’ve allowed for two people to play together, and that is a hope, that people are able to combo their abilities together, have a little fun. You and I could be playing and we could say, ‘Hey, why don’t you do all the stasis?’ And I’m going to take the guys out or be running around healing you or whatever roles you want to create for yourselves. You’re able to do that.

Won’t bringing in online co-op to a traditionally single-player system create some problems?

Yeah, that’s something that we’re definitely looking at in terms of the way that the save system will work. The takeaway here is that you will have persistence, so if you were playing and now your buddy wants you to play, you don’t have to start over, you don’t have to have a different profile. We wanted to make it extremely easy and user-friendly from a drop-in/drop-out perspective, and if you happen to be more advanced and have a bunch of ammo or health packs or whatever, you could come in and give it to your friend if you wanted. We really encourage sharing and teamwork.

Surely that will unbalance things?

The hope is that we are able to balance the game appropriately so that one person doesn’t just walk in and lay waste to everything. If that means we allow you to have different profiles so that you can actually do that, that’s one thing we’re

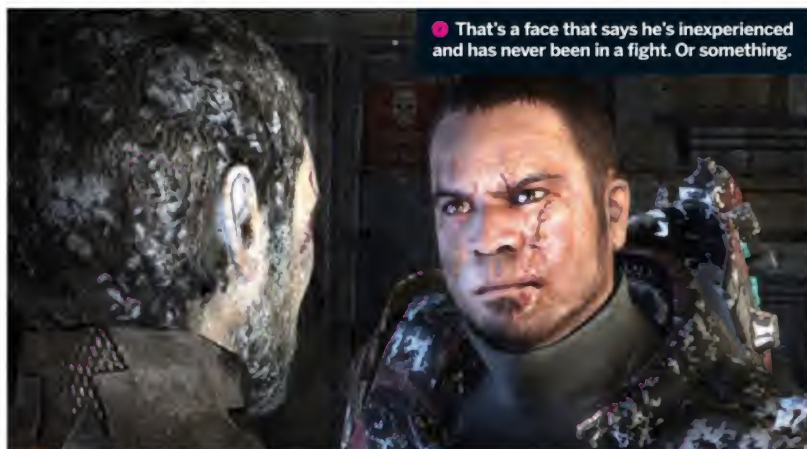


● Oh, look. It’s one of these guys.

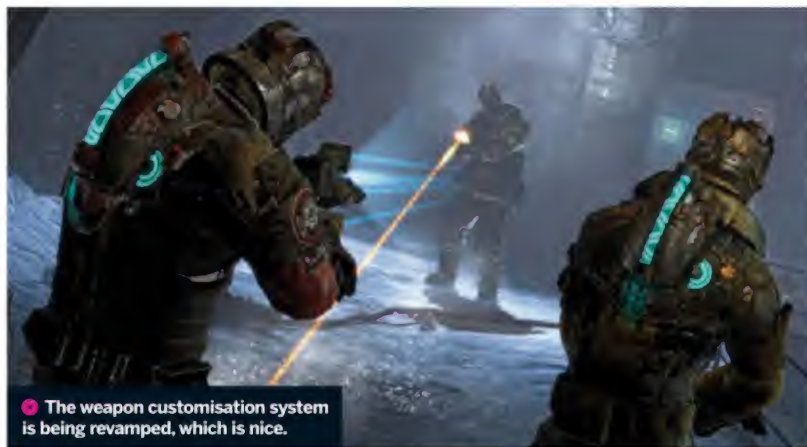
looking at. The other one is just difficulty settings. Let’s say I’m a newbie, I’m in Chapter 1, I’m asking you to play and you’ve beat the game three times. Players should co-ordinate and say, ‘Hey, bump it up to Zealot [difficulty] so that it’s challenging for me. Or, guess what, I’m going to use a weapon I’ve never used before – in this playthrough I’m going to specialise in this crafted weapon.

And what about the human element? Why are these guys now showing up to the fight?

We don’t find ourselves going: ‘Hey, guess what – we want pink elephants. Let’s put pink elephants in the game.’ We’ve sat in a room and we’ve all talked about what we are trying to do with the story. Well, we want to answer questions; we want to see what happens with these factions that we have out there. There’s humans, but now it’s time for Isaac to showdown with them, so that’s why they’re in the game. We really go back and look at the story and see if it fits in there. We don’t really shoehorn random stuff in. We’re very protective of it. We are, first and foremost, fans of videogames, and we know what it feels like when somebody just puts something and you’re like, ‘Oh, why would you do that?’ It just feels wrong. ❌



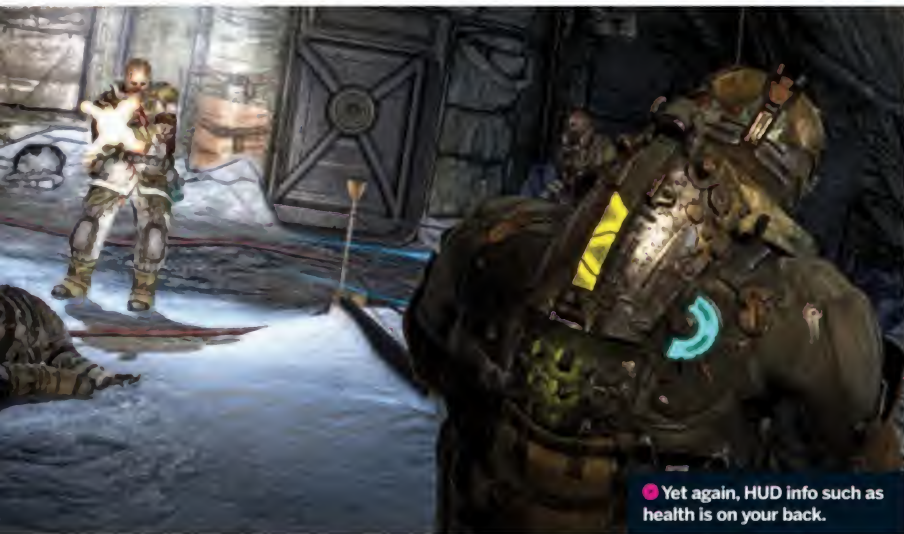
● That’s a face that says he’s inexperienced and has never been in a fight. Or something.



● The weapon customisation system is being revamped, which is nice.



Has that thing come straight from a Bournemouth hen party?



Yet again, HUD info such as health is on your back.



New favourite screenshot: GET.



And three, two, one... SMOULDER.



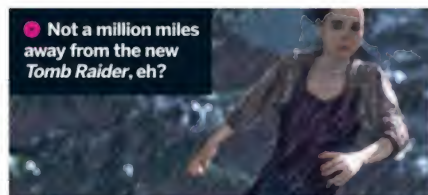
PREVIEW



● Facial animation is far better than before.



● Not a million miles away from the new Tomb Raider, eh?



SMALL BUT STRONG

Great casting by Quantic Dream?

ONE OF THE key components to *Beyond*'s success will be the performance of Ellen Page, and whether we buy the fact that she really is an ass-kicking antihero. The trailers so far have played on this quite a bit already – showing Jodie taking out cops with some impressive fighting skills – and, truth be told, Cage seems to have coaxed out a good performance. *Heavy Rain* fell down thanks to poor acting and a shonky script, and it would be a shame if that repeated itself here.

● There's more action here than the fairly low-key unveiling might suggest.



HEAVY RAIN 2?



RELEASE DATE: EARLY 2013

It looks like it's raining quite heavily. Eh? Eh?

Beyond: Two Souls

He ain't Heavy. He's my brother



Unless you're a complete troll who sleeps in Naughty Dog pyjamas under a *Call Of Duty* duvet and hates anything that differs from the norm, it's hard not to be intrigued by the prospect of a new David Cage game. Love him or hate him, he's going to give you something to talk about, and *Beyond: Two Souls* is no different.

"*Beyond* is the story of two characters, Jodie and Aiden, through 15 years of the life of Jodie Holmes," Cage told us. "We will see this young girl talking to an invisible friend; we will see her become a young, angry teenager who wants to be like everybody else but can't because Aiden is always in the way."

Not your average shooter, then, but you probably didn't expect that anyway. By now you've likely seen the trailer and demo, depicting a frightened Ellen Page – yes, actually her and not some knock-off like Naughty Dog came up with – doing battle with SWAT teams and police officers. Her slight frame hides some interesting hand-to-hand fighting abilities, but it's Aiden, her spirit buddy, that's going to make sure she doesn't end up dead.

"I've always been fascinated by people talking to no one, to an invisible friend. I think there's something really weird about this," Cage continued. "Sometimes if you're Parisian you see people on the metro, homeless guys, talking. 'Hey, can you hear me?' What would be really interesting is if they were talking to someone and you just couldn't see them. That was where the idea came from."

Not that Aiden is some benevolent force that exists only for a quick chat. Similar to old GameCube game *Geist*, you can use him to take over people's bodies, turning friends and allies against each other.

We've seen Aiden used to make a SWAT sniper fire on his own team, and to provide a distraction while Jodie makes her escape. At one point he manifests a shield around Page's character as she jumps off a moving train. He works as a powerful weapon, but a limited one, designed to heighten tension as the nationwide manhunt tightens the noose.

"Depending on the colour of the aura [around enemies], you know what you can do with people. Orange enables you to possess them. Red

aura allows you to choke them, so you can kill them. But this is not a set of rules set in stone; it depends on the age of Jodie, what you can do – his power grows [over time] – and the mental state of Jodie. If she's really tired, if she's in bad shape, Aiden's power will get lower."

Interesting stuff there about Jodie's age, and it's something Cage wants to follow through with. Rather than being set in a small time frame of a few days or weeks, decades will pass during the course of *Beyond's* story, which should present some interesting story-based questions, but what about the mechanics? Is it just another *Heavy Rain*? Yes and no, according to Cage. In some regards it's the same, in that your actions will have consequences and influence what happens next. That said, other things have changed, including some important elements.

"The big difference is that there's more exploration," Cage explained. "*Heavy Rain* was mainly small environments and houses. In *Beyond* you will have a mix of different types of areas, have exploration. There are many things you will see, and I think people will

be surprised by the size of some areas and how detailed they can be, even though they're much, much bigger. I wouldn't say the philosophy has changed since *Heavy Rain*; it's a different story, in a different style, in a different genre. With a different balance of action and narrative and adventure, in a way. A different flavour. I think we've improved in all areas. The idea here was not to create another videogame that looks like a videogame and plays like a videogame."

Heavy stuff, as usual from Cage. You can't fault the ambition on show, though, and from what we've seen it looks very promising. "What is a little new compared to *Heavy Rain* is there are much more sandbox aspects to it. It's less driven, a little more open, [although not all the time]. What I try and do is create an illusion. You'll forget this is a videogame with a program running pixels in the background. I'll make you forget that this is a game. I want you to forget everything."

As ever, then, David Cage's latest is ambitious, probably slightly pretentious, but most of all an interesting experience. It might not convince the fanboys and their AKs with red-dot sights, but it will be worth playing. Who knows? It might actually be important.

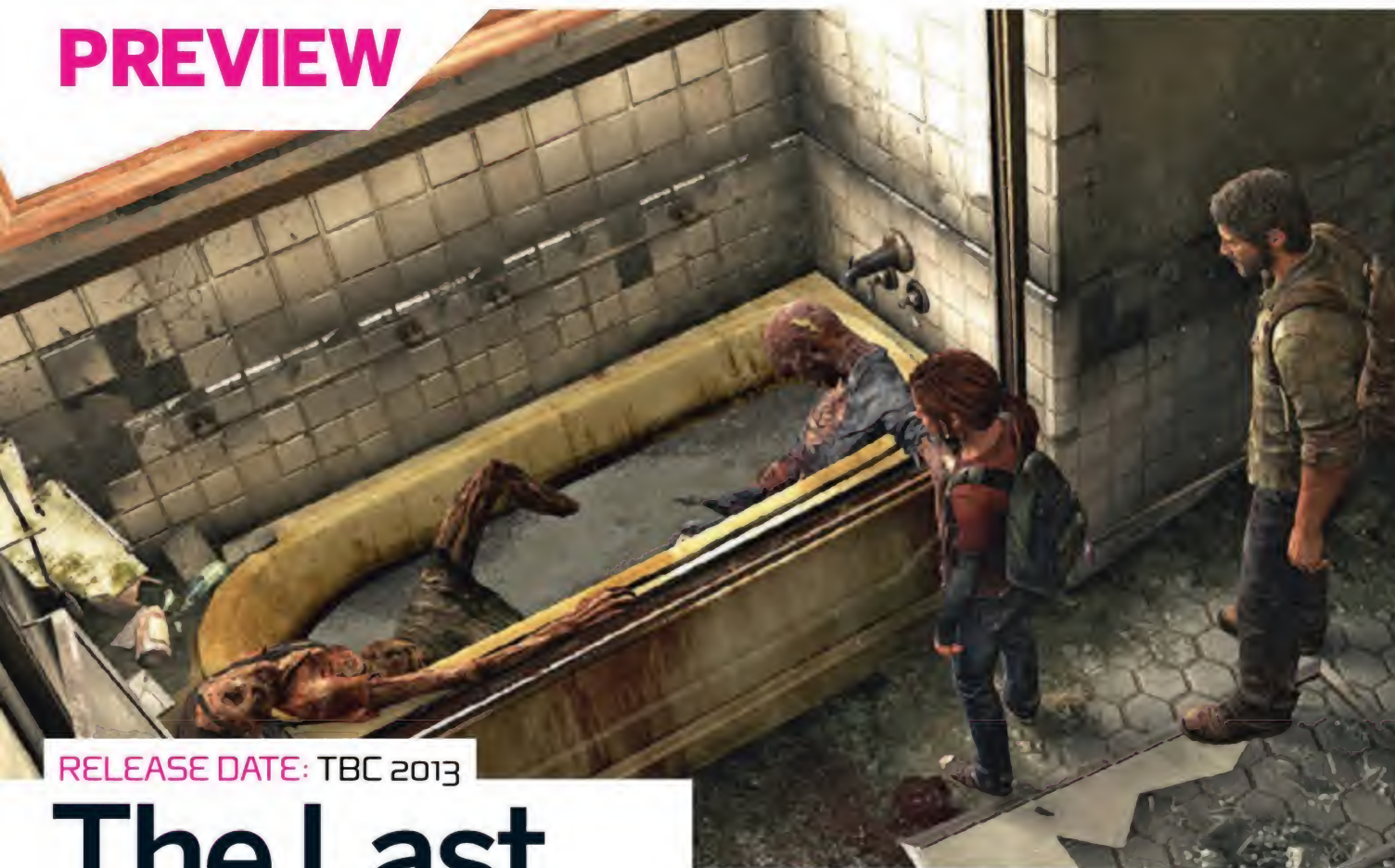
Beyond: Two Souls is being developed by David Cage and Quantic Dream. Check them out at quanticdream.com

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Good acting.
- More exploration than *Heavy Rain*.
- Nice facial tech.
- Invisible friends.

READ ME

The best thing about Cage is that he's crazy and pretentious, like a Bond villain. "I try to have as few mechanics as I can. Because I don't like mechanics. Mechanics are the opposite of life. Life is organic... This is what I try to do in my work."



RELEASE DATE: TBC 2013

The Last Of Us

High quality escort (mission)

PS3

People are never happy, are they? After Naughty Dog gave PS3 owners three of the best gaming experiences this generation in the *Uncharted* series, it followed up with this, one of the most interesting games of next year. And then people moaned that it was just like *Uncharted*. Eh? Yes, there are similarities. Because they're made by the same studio. Maybe ND should have just thrown out all that awesome tech and started again.

Didn't think so. *The Last Of Us* might look like *Dishevelled Drake's Day Out*, but underneath that it could be a game to top the mighty *Uncharted 2*. Let's have a look at the reasons why, then all take a moment to relax.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Survival...
- ...horror.
- It's like *SOS: The Final Escape*.
- Which is probably the best game ever made. Ahem.

READ ME

Remember when Ellie looked exactly like Ellen Page and then they changed her, citing some nonsense or another? And then another PS3 exclusive turned up, this time featuring the actual Ellen Page? Hmmmm.



BACK PACK BLUES

Although the on-screen HUD might be kept to a minimum, a quick glance at Joel's inventory suggests a fairly sophisticated system for getting the most out of your items. In the demo we saw Joel creating a Molotov cocktail out of the stuff in his bag; the question is, what else can he put together from the junk he finds about the place?

Well, there are spaces in the backpack for stuff like bindings, alcohol, sugar, explosives and canisters. If we can't make a nail bomb we'll be very, very surprised. As we will if we're not using said materials for traversing the environment. Look up PS2 game *SOS: The Final Escape* for an example of how we think the mechanic will work.

STARE OUT CHAMPIONSHIP 2012

Why is Ellie always staring at something?



3

ESCORTING THE PACKAGE

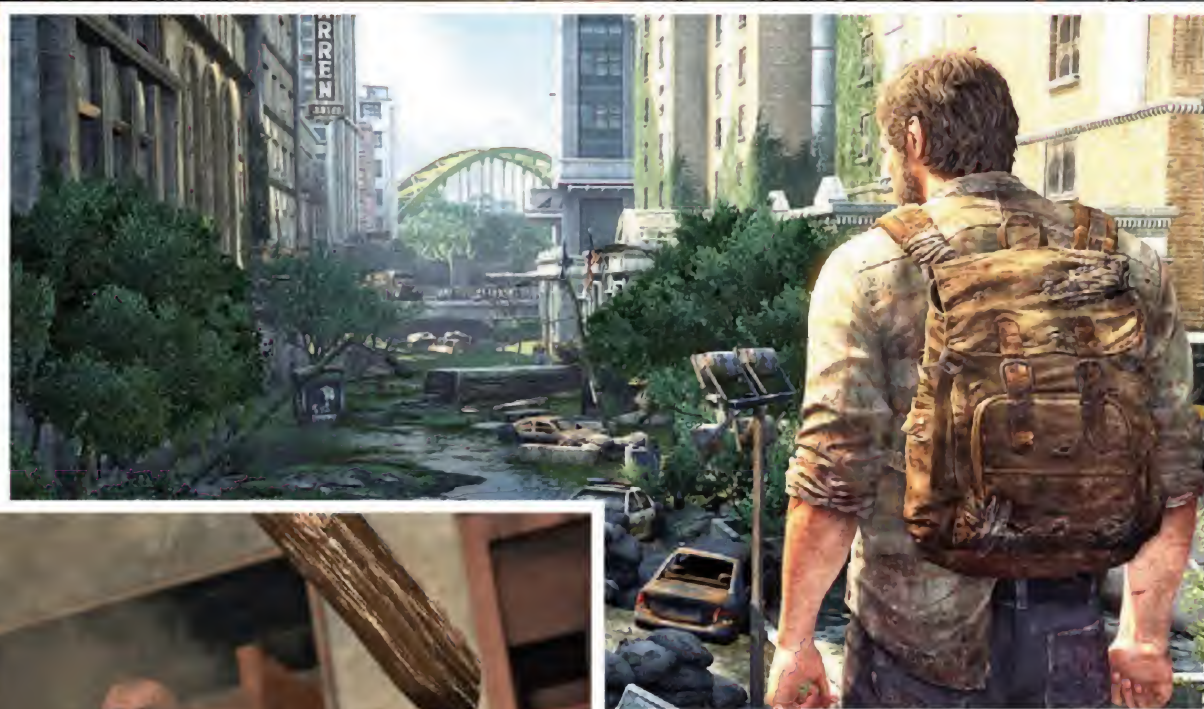
In games, things don't get much more annoying than cut-scenes just after checkpoints. In fact, only one thing is more annoying: rubbish escort AI. Anyone who has ever tried to escort a dumb-as-rocks CPU companion will know this pain, but *The Last Of Us* looks like it's got it just right. Ellie is constantly close, yet not in the way, distracting enemies but not defeating them. If there was one area of the game we were worried about it was this, but after recent showings we can probably rest easy. And then kill Naughty Dog if it somehow screws it up at the last minute. Like Natalya in N64 *GoldenEye*'s Control level.



PACE CONTROL

One of the great appeals of *The Last Of Us* is, obviously, its setting. Despite the fact that apocalyptic/zombie thrillers are en vogue at the moment, and as such a bit overexposed, we love the way *The Last Of Us* seems to be balancing action and exploration. Let's face it: the best part of any end-of-the-world game or film is seeing the survivors running about in places they normally couldn't. With nature starting to reclaim the environment around them, this should give Joel and Ellie plenty of scope to check out every nook and cranny of the world they're trapped in. Let's just hope it's not too linear.

4



5

ENEMY OF THE STATE

In the dark alternate future put forward by any game where civilisation has gone to the dogs, the most dangerous element still left is humans. And so it is here. Yeah, there are a load of zomboid bad guys running around out there, desperate to smash you to pieces, but it's the savage cunning of the human survivors that is the real threat. We've seen them gang up on our heroes, ambush them in their car, and generally make a nuisance of themselves. Will there be sympathetic human factions out there that Ellie and Joel can ally themselves with? And what will happen to them?



RELEASE DATE: TBA 2013

Splinter Cell Blacklist

Back in black



No, Michael Ironside isn't Sam Fisher any more. Get over it. As much as we love him, he's just too old for this... work. As befits the series' move into more action-oriented territory, now Sam's face, voice and everything else have to blend into one, rather than being layered over the top. So introducing - Eric Johnson of *Smallville* fame! Oh.

It makes sense, sad as it may be, and doubly so given that this new *Splinter Cell* is even more action-packed than the last game, *Conviction*, which was hogged by 360 owners. Swine.

Taking that game's Mark and Execute feature and expanding it, *Blacklist* now puts a focus on 'Killing In Motion'. In *Conviction*, silently taking down enough goons granted you the opportunity to tag enemies, taking them out stylishly with one button press. It's expanded here: using a bit of *Assassin's Creed*-inspired free-running, you can move quickly through an area, dispatching foes with Mark and Execute before barrelling over cover and taking out enemies close up, therefore giving you more M&E powers to keep the combo rolling.

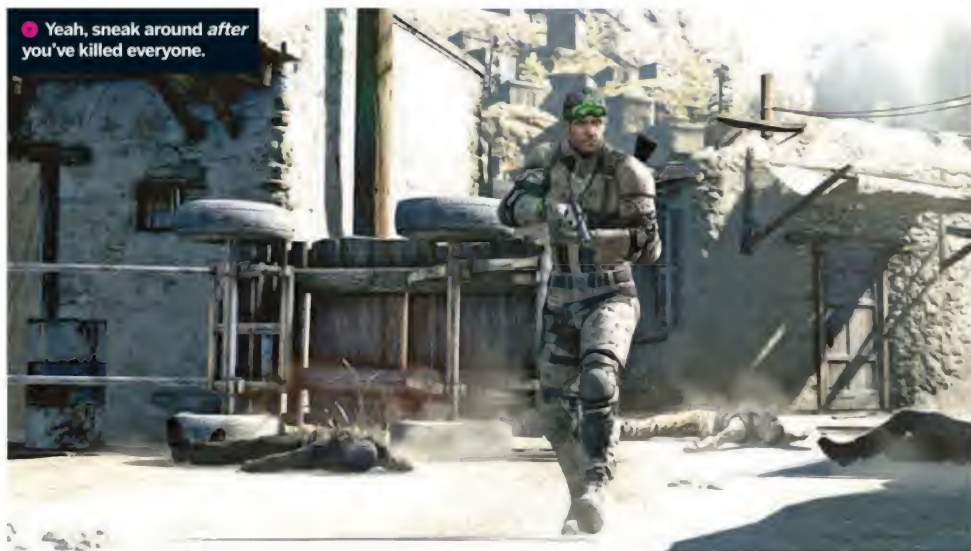
In practice it works well and looks very, very cool. Yes, it's not really classic *Splinter Cell*, but those days are dead and, besides, there's plenty of scope to get the drop on guards via the aforementioned navigation mechanics. The classic tent-slice infiltration is there, and we saw Sam use his new-found athletic prowess to scamper up walls, before setting traps for passing guards. One example shown had Sam killing a soldier, letting his comrade discover the body, and then sticky-shocking the water underneath them both.

Like a lot of gameplay demos, action is showcased because it's more exciting, and we'll eat our night-vision goggles if this doesn't cater for the stealth crowd. Old-school fans might moan, but then they can go back to *Chaos Theory* any time they like. Evolve or die.

Speaking of evolution, in *Blacklist* Fisher seems to have been promoted. He's now the head of Fourth Echelon, which is even more secret, and even less accountable, than Third Echelon. In fact, Sam answers only to the President. He has been tasked with hunting down terror cells that are striking



Is that a DLC ad to the left of Sam? Sigh.



Yeah, sneak around after you've killed everyone.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



Improved Mark and Execute.



Enjoyable dynamic.



Upgradeable gadgets.



Stealth is still there.

US interests: the titular Blacklist. The demo showed Fisher sneaking and snapping his way across the Iran/Iraq border to extract a cell leader. As he does so, he gets to use some of the new toys his status commands, chief among them being the ability to mark targets and call in air strikes.

The demo ends with Sam confronting the leader, who blows his own brains out rather than face capture. It won't just be the Middle East, however, that will be party to the Sam Fisher Headshot Show: he'll be jetting around the world, including the US, no doubt contravening all kinds of human rights laws in the name of freedom. How timely.

So far and so good, at least from our perspective – we're sure some of you are probably cradling your Michael Ironside plush toys at the moment, wondering why he left you. One aspect of the game we are concerned about, however, is the multiplayer. Nothing has been revealed so far, but after the omission of the excellent two-on-two Spies vs Mercs game mode from *Conviction*, we're desperate for it to return. Granted, the last game had a co-op mode that was a lot of fun, but come on. Why not both?

Either way, we're excited for *Splinter Cell Blacklist*. The series is changing but there's enough of the classic DNA in there for it to appeal to fans both new and old.

Splinter Cell Blacklist is being developed by Ubisoft Toronto. Find it online at ubi.com

READ ME

As well as his usual assortment of pistols and rifles, Fisher has retained his knife, which is vitally important to the new Killing In Motion mechanic.

This isn't going to end well for someone. Guess who.



SHOP SMART

Become a more efficient killer

SAM NOW HAS the backing of the SMI, or Strategic Mission Interface. An elaborate HUD basically, but it does give you vital information on your targets – one example shown had Sam using it to accurately ascertain the identity of a cell leader, which is handy because you can't interrogate someone you've shot in the face.

As well as that, there's the ability to upgrade your gear via SMI. By completing missions you'll get cash, and between stages you'll have the chance to specialise your gear. It's not likely to blow anyone's mind, but it will hopefully give players the opportunity to play the game how they want.



PREVIEW



CROSSOVER POTENTIAL

While it's obviously a huge deal for the Vita to feature a fully fledged *Assassin's Creed* game, there are also interesting implications for cross-platform play raised by the announcement of *Assassin's Creed III: Liberation*.

Out on the same day as the PS3 game and featuring a female protagonist named Aveline de Grandpré, who appears to be fighting for freedom in New Orleans, there's no way this can't be a deliberate move. Sony is going big on cross-platform: first with Steam, now with Vita, especially in the face of Wii U's tablet. Expect to be able to continue one adventure in another on 31 October. If you've got the hardware and the cash, that is.

RED DEAD REVOLUTION

We all knew that implementing an ecosystem in *Assassin's Creed III* would lead to some comparisons to *Red Dead Redemption*. Seeing it in action does little to dispel said comparisons, but so what? *Red Dead* is a classic, and only fools don't borrow from the masters when they can.

Hunting aside, though, we're finding ourselves wondering how the rest of the environmental interaction is going to work. *Assassin's Creed III* isn't set in a self-contained city that is already established; it's an evolving community, essentially at war. The currency and purchasing system will return, we're sure of that. 'How?' is the question. We can't wait to find out.



ENVIRON-MENTAL

Although it's rightly famed for its campaign, *Assassin's Creed* is fast becoming known for its multiplayer game, which has evolved steadily since it was introduced in *Brotherhood*. It looks even better here, introducing environmental kills, dynamic weather, and a new game mode: Domination.

Domination is a three-sided battle, with two teams of four fighting it out to control a certain zone, netting them points. The interesting part is that there are also assassins out there, looking to take people down.

This all sounds wonderful, if we're honest, and totally in keeping with the ethos of the rest of the game. Ubisoft hasn't disappointed on the multiplayer front thus far, and we don't bet on it starting now.

4 A SEA CHANGE

If you're thinking that the one thing the *Assassin's Creed* series needed was more boats then congratulations: you have won videogames, because *Assassin's Creed III* has a ton of the things.

It all figures, really, seeing as the British Navy was the most feared on the high seas back then, stomping the world into submission. *Assassin's Creed III* will give you the chance to fight back, commanding and controlling ships as you engage the enemy. And guess what? After you've pummelled them with broadside after broadside, you can then board rival craft for some up close and personal violence. Just the way we like it.

RELEASE DATE: 31 OCTOBER 2012

Assassin's Creed III

The New World order

PS3

The last *Assassin's Creed* game, *Revelations*, was a passable entry into the fun but increasingly flawed series. All the core elements were there – you could stab people in the throat, romance the ladies, wonder when Ezio would be too old for this nonsense – but it was clear that the yearly turnaround was harming the franchise. Nothing was changing, and to make it worse, feature-creep was rearing its ugly little head. Tower defence? Do one, yeah? The franchise needed to evolve, and it looks like it's doing exactly that with this, the not-at-all-confusing third yet fifth instalment.

With a new setting, a new lead character and a host of gameplay improvements, this could be the refresher the series needs to ensure that it doesn't become totally stale.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- New setting.
- Ecosystem to kill.
- New character.
- Multiplayer sounds ace.

READ ME

Despite the fact that there's been an *Assassin's Creed* game every year for the last 200, *Assassin's Creed III* has been in development for three years.

5

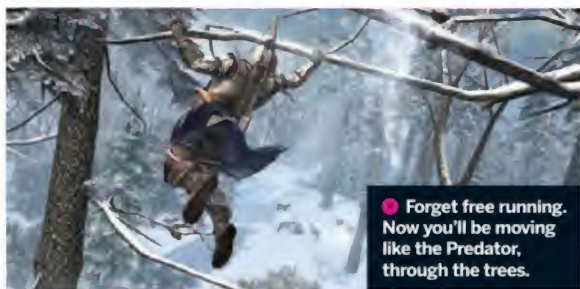
CARIBBEAN SEAS

It's not uncommon for the *Assassin's Creed* series to feature different playing environments – the games have always been built across two timelines, and *Revelations* had two different past time zones in which to run around. But for *III* to feature campaigns in both the Caribbean and America at ostensibly the same time is interesting. We don't think that we'll be roaming the oceans from one to another, but it does raise some interesting questions.

How much of the game is set in the Caribbean? Is it linear, or do you hop back and forth? And is the Caribbean portion something like the Mediterranean Defence mini-game in *Revelations*, only far more involved?

NEW DOG, NEW TRICKS

Show what you've learned



● Forget free running. Now you'll be moving like the Predator, through the trees.



● What's this? A cover system in *Assassin's Creed*? Well, yes. We welcome the change.



● The combat system was impressive before, but far more fluid here.

PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

FIFA 13

You've got to hold and give, but do it at the right time



When you're told the latest *FIFA* is to contain "a revolution of game-changing features", you might think it's tactical defending all over again: loved by many, hated by many and put up with by many.

Turns out that might be a fair bit of overstatement on the part of EA, as *FIFA 13*, while containing plenty of iterative changes to keep things fresh, isn't a revolution. But from what we've seen and played of it, it might well not need to be.

The marquee change is the first-touch control system. Whereas in previous games anyone of any skill level would instantly bring the ball under control, now there are variables. The skill of the player, the speed of the ball, how they are stood, the pressure they're under; it all comes together as the resulting touch. It could be fine. It could be bad, allowing the opposition to get

the ball back. It could be terrible, causing you to fling your pad out of a nearby window. It's realistic, though, and it makes things less like the game is played by perfect robo-men.

Speaking of touch, the dribbling has seen some updates that have made it more friendly for those who like to try to beat opponents. We specifically tested how robust this system was by putting Zlatan Ibrahimovic in the middle of a gaggle of defenders and having him try to wiggle his way out. And you can. Close control is improved, you can stay facing a defender while running with the ball, and the introduction of a stripped-down version of the *FIFA Street* control system means there are more tools than ever for Ibra to nonchalantly skip past a defence before spanking it in the top corner.

One welcome improvement that impressed is the better movement of team-mates. Runs are curved to

avoid offsides, players are decisive in getting into space, and it generally feels like you have a team supporting you instead of a group of zombies awaiting a button press to tell them to do what they would be doing unprompted were this real football.

The upgrades to free kicks, on the other hand, while totally welcome – you can add players to the wall, charge down the kick, call in other players to dummy, and some other features – just make us think: 'This was in *PES* years ago.' Because it was. There's little else to add to that.

Be under no illusion: this is *FIFA*, again, and it isn't host to anything like as big a change as tactical defending. Extended play will reveal whether it's for good or not, but from the exposure we've had to *FIFA 13* so far, we're left feeling positive.

FIFA 13 is being developed by EA Sports. Check out www.ea.com/uk/football for more details.



No word on how keepers have been improved.



Up to three players can be involved in the taking of a free kick.



OPPOSITE-ATTACK

Defence is the best form of defence



TACTICAL DEFENDING REMAINS. This may scare you if you weren't a fan of its... subtleties. But fear not! For EA Sports has, this time around, found the time to build systems around the defending so it feels less entirely out of place. Pushing and pulling, allowing defenders to break up an attacker's flow/concentration, blocking off runs and risking a foul, improvements to the player physics – less kissing and fewer backflips, with more realistic muscling off the ball. It all comes together to make for a better, more refined system for defending. If only they'd done it first time around, though.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



Better attacking.



Better defending.



Better Ibrahimovic.



We want to play it more. This must be a good thing.

READ ME

We'd confidently state that this is the 20th edition of *FIFA*, but there are so many other versions and extra bits here and there that it's scaring us into being unsure.

● The expanded vampires bring new abilities, such as the Force-style Vampiric Grip.

STUNNING DLC



RELEASE DATE: AUTUMN

The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim: Dawnguard

Vampires are alive, the legends have to survive

PS3 Bethesda holds the record for the most ridiculously misjudged piece of DLC ever released – Horse Armor for *Oblivion* – but also the record for some of the best pieces in that game's *Shivering Isles*. It looks very much like *Dawnguard*, the first expansion for *Skyrim*, will indeed fall into the latter category – while it does feature horses, there's been no sign of armour for them. Yet. So we're hopeful.

The setting for *Dawnguard* takes in a conflict between two factions:

the titular Dawnguard and the evil bastard vampire types – that's probably not their official name. The player slots in and can take either side, helping or hindering as they go along with or against the vampire lord's plot to use the Elder Scrolls to blot out the sun. No sun means happy vamps, you see?

So what this means in a game sense is more missions, more locales and more folks to natter with. It means we see the home of the Dawnguard. It means we get to question whether that faction

is as simple as it seems: is it full of normal people fighting vampires, or is it something more? We get to see an underworld locale with ghostly horses. We get to see crossbows making their first appearance on PS3, and their first in the series since 2002's *Morrowind*. We get to see a lot of newness for our coin – and we get to see a reminder of what solid DLC looks like.

Though that does assume it's fun to play. But *Dawnguard* brings with it more *Skyrim*, and we were big fans of the game, much-reported issues notwithstanding. But this is the patched-up, improved and fixed version, and now it's going to have a whole lot more to do slapped on top of it. Also: more vampires. We're excited.

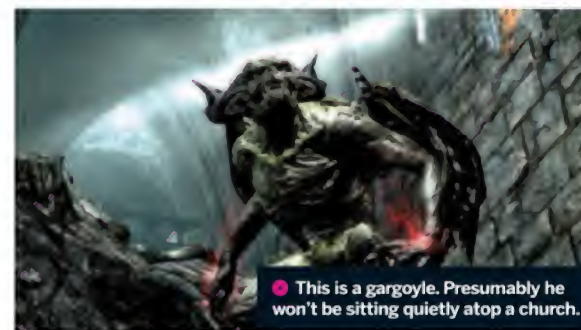
Skyrim's *Dawnguard* expansion is being developed by Bethesda. Check out www.elderscrolls.com for more details.



● Dawnguard will take advantage of the newly added horseback combat.



● Crossbows will bring certain advantages for those who favour ranged combat.



● This is a gargoyle. Presumably he won't be sitting quietly atop a church.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Crossbows are back, and crossbows are always great.
- It's not Horse Armor.
- More *Skyrim* is a good thing, and this isn't just a throwaway addition.
- Anything that lets you quote DJ Bobo in the standfirst is a winner.

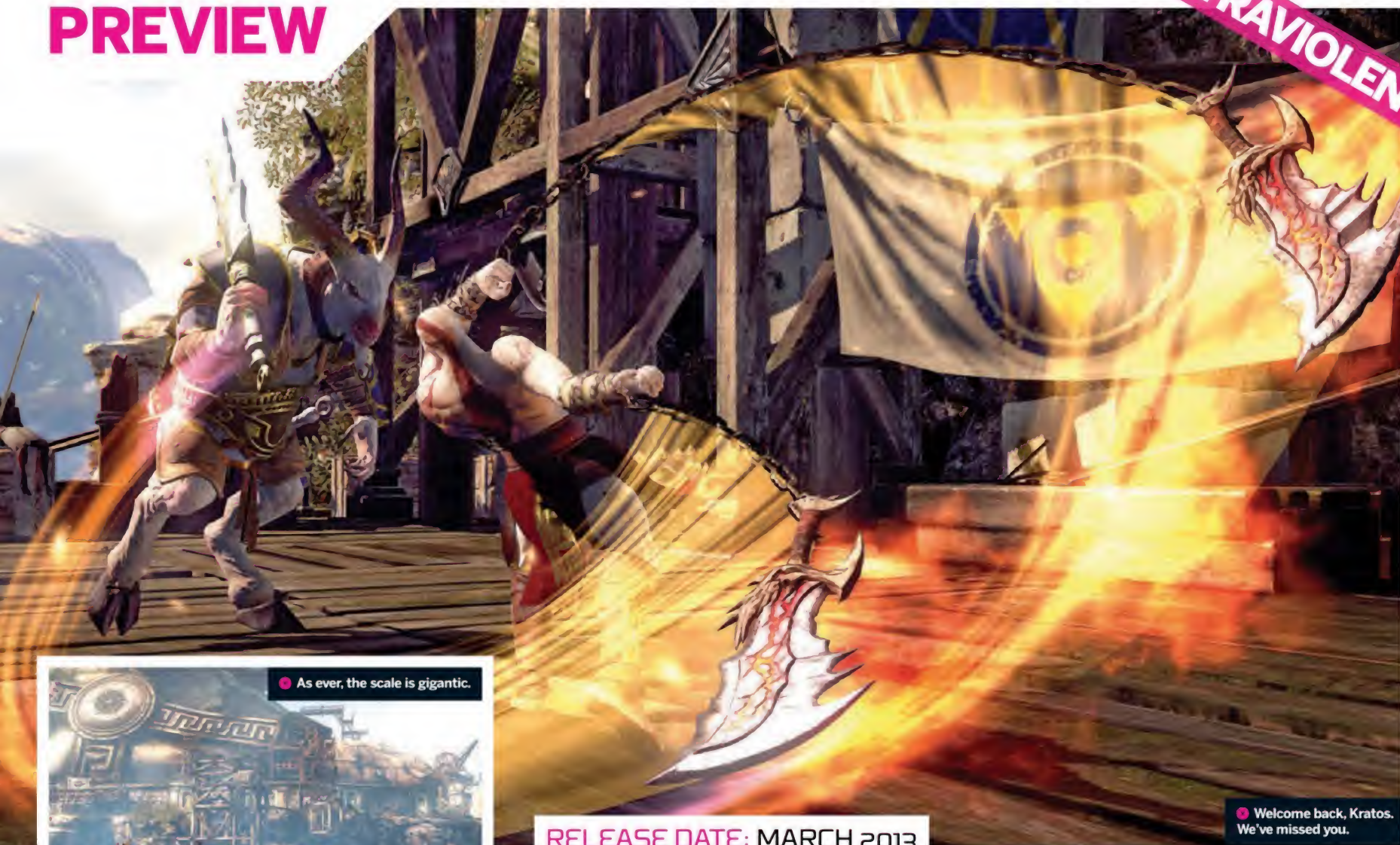
READ ME

Microsoft has an exclusivity deal on *Skyrim*'s DLC, irritatingly. But it doesn't really change much – we just have to wait a bit longer for the PS3 release.

A BIT NIPPY OUT THERE

Tonight I'm going to suck!

VAMPIRES WERE FEATURED in *Skyrim*, though it was pretty easy to get through the majority of the game only encountering them a few times. Plus when you could cure the early stages of vampirism with a simple potion, it was... underwhelming. *Dawnguard* will rectify this, bringing us much deeper and more involved interactions with the undead bitey buggers. Good stuff.



As ever, the scale is gigantic.

Welcome back, Kratos. We've missed you.

RELEASE DATE: MARCH 2013

God Of War: Ascension

Ghost Of Sparta: Advanced Warfighter



God Of War is back! And it's pretty much the same! Well, in single-player at least. By now you know the drill: you're angry, you're quadruple hard, you're about to tear fools up. It's a time-honoured tradition, and in all fairness it looks suitably gory, is magnificently well presented, and the scale is massive. Good. Good. There are some changes, such as the ability to sort of rewind time and rebuild broken structures, which we're hoping will lead to some excellent puzzles, and you can also use this power to freeze enemies. But yeah:

it's the same *God Of War* you know and love.

It's the multiplayer we're more interested in, what with it being a first for the series and all that. Up to eight players can get their war faces on, in what appears to be a three-sided battle for territory. Four players on each team square off to control different points of a map, using all their hack-and-slash skills in the process. Controlling these areas rewards players with different weapons and abilities from the gods, with the caveat being that the team has to sacrifice their champion to them in the process.

A touch of strategy is introduced via the inclusion of titans, who can pop up on the scene and be, with a bit of skill, essentially 'used' by one team. For example, when controlling a certain number of points, the winning team was awarded the Spear of Destiny to dispatch the cyclops. The kicker is that these powerful beings will force co-operation between teams thanks to their power, creating a cold war of sorts, a race to stab each other in the back. Interesting.

It all sounds very cool, and the inclusion of basic tactics could elevate multiplayer above merely an interesting distraction. With this not being a numbered sequel, and with the campaign allegedly shorter than before, we're not going to get totally crazy about it just yet, though.

MAKING YOUR MIND UP

Choose which god you're allied to **THERE ARE FOUR** gods for players to pledge allegiance to in *Ascension*'s multiplayer mode: Zeus, Hades, Ares and Poseidon. Each will be able to offer the player different rewards for his services, similar to specialisation-based warfare found in other games. We're not sure exactly what those rewards are as yet, but we're hoping they'll extend the lifespan of the mode.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Kratos is back.
- Multiplayer looks good.
- And he's stronger than ever.
- We haven't seen much, so it could get better.

READ ME

Another prequel – there's nowhere else to go after *GOW III*. This time, however, with the full grunt of the PS3 and Sony Santa Monica developing it. This will be good.

God Of War: Ascension is developed by Sony Santa Monica. Find it online at www.worldwidestudios.net/santamonica



RELEASE DATE: EARLY 2013

Ni No Kuni: Wrath Of The White Witch

The title roughly translates as 'JUST LOOK AT IT'



● Lantern-nose there is called Drippy. He's Welsh.

PS3

Much as we want to avoid this nonsense, it's hard not to slip into cliché territory when presented with *Ni No Kuni*. Yes, we're going to say it: this is a damn fine-looking game. Look at it. It looks like that, but moving, basically. How is that not a good thing? Man, graphics are the best thing in the world.

Right, we can stop that now. What's more important is that *Ni No Kuni* is a JRPG from Level-5. What that means is it's from the studio that brought us *Dark Chronicle*, *Rogue Galaxy*, *Jeanne D'Arc*, *Dragon Quest VIII* and *Professor Layton*. It's a studio that makes games of consistently high quality and knows how to make RPGs. Also *White Knight Chronicles*.

With that in mind, it should come as little surprise that beyond the remarkable look of *Ni No Kuni*,

when you scratch a little bit under the surface, you're met with the sort of game you've seen dozens of times before. This isn't a criticism, mind you, as it's a formula that lives and dies as much on its setting as on what buttons you have to press. Level-5 has a great skeleton of systems in place, and Studio Ghibli has come along and made it a world you want to spend time in.

So while you're taking part in a rather standard genre experience, it's all encapsulated in a world that overwhelms with how ruddy lovely it is. In fact, as it turns out, looks really are important with *Ni No Kuni*.

And yes, you will venture out into the world, you will marvel at just how pretty it is, you will encounter thankfully non-random battles en route and, if you're the JRPG type, you will like it. The story of how this one plays out has pretty much

already been written. For all the complaints we could make about the lack of real innovation, it all falls by the wayside. *Ni No Kuni* feels so warm and welcoming and nice, and we trust Level-5 because of the games we mentioned earlier, and we trust Studio Ghibli because *look at it*, and maybe we just want to play something that isn't walking down corridors, shooting foreigners.

Level-5 has a reputation for great JRPGs, and Studio Ghibli has a reputation for having a name we're not quite sure how to pronounce, as well as for making beautiful, imaginative worlds. The combination of the two is unlikely to tear down the walls of the genre, but it's sure to give us something worth our time.

Ni No Kuni is being developed by Level-5. Check out www.ninokunigame.com for more info.



NI NO KUNI 05

The influence of Studio Ghibli

SO WHAT IS 'The Ghibli Effect'? as some other schmuck has probably already named it? Well, it's the influence of an animation studio that brings with it a distinct and beautiful aesthetic. It's traditionally animated cut-scenes spliced seamlessly into the game. It's the story of a young boy on an adventure to bring his mother back from the dead – probably not in a horrifying way. It's pig people and other such imagination-rich folk, people and near-people. It is, not to get a bit too gushy, a style, an atmosphere and a world with a lot of heart.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

JUST

LOOK

AT

IT

READ ME

The Level-5 game we think you should all check out, but would guess you probably haven't, is *Jeanne D'Arc* on PSP. Masterful SRPG work.



RELEASE DATE: EARLY 2013

Lost Planet 3

A bug hunt in dead space

PS3

Depending on whether you played it online or not, *Lost Planet 2* was either fantastic or akin to pulling your eyes out with a low-powered vacuum. Poor AI scuppered the experience when soloing the game, but with friends it was a blast.

Attempting to learn from Capcom's mistakes is Spark Unlimited, developer of the underwhelming *Legendary* and *Turning Point* franchises. Series fans might not want to hear that, and we're still not convinced that the Japanese firm's commitment to outsourcing franchises is the way forward for Capcom. Kenji Oguro, producer on previous *Lost Planet* titles, is overseeing the operation. Capcom isn't totally hands-off then, but the same should be noted about the dreadful *Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City*.

From what we've seen, though, *Lost Planet 3* is nowhere near as bad as that atrocity. From good voice acting to mech vs Akrid combat, via some 'inspiration' from other titles, the game's got plenty going for it. We're quietly hopeful.



1

MECH VS BUG: FIGHT!

Lost Planet's key defining feature is its massive bugs. Even as the game has changed in style and mechanics, it's these guys that have remained front and centre.

No surprise that they're back, then, but now the odds have been evened. The Rig is a giant mech that acts as both your comms network with home base and a gigantic pair of fists for you to batter the bigger bugs.

There are still the trademark glowing orange weak spots, of course, but you'll also be able to engage in hand-to-hand combat with the Akrid. Our demo saw us pummeling a huge enemy before grabbing it and slamming a drill-like arm into its back, killing it. It's pretty clunky, but in a good way, changing up the gameplay nicely.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's snowy again!
- The main character's not called Wayne!
- The voice acting is really good.
- Hopefully less grinding. Please, no more grinding.

READ ME

Lost Planet 3 is the latest in Capcom's adventures in outsourcing. It looks far better than *Operation Raccoon City*, that's for sure.



2

TALENT BORROWS, GENIUS STEALS

There's no getting away from it: Spark Unlimited has been smashing *Dead Space 2*, if its influence on *Lost Planet 3* is anything to go by. As well as the mech-based combat that the series is known for, there's now a lot of creeping around abandoned research stations, waiting for the violin stab and some bugs to jump out at you.

It's a change of pace from the all-action second game, and although the inspiration is nakedly apparent, we're not too mad at the developer for taking it on board. After all, *Dead Space 2* is one of the most well-regarded games of this generation, and there's plenty to be learned from it. As there is from *Lost Planet*, if the new *Dead Space 3* screenshots are to be believed.

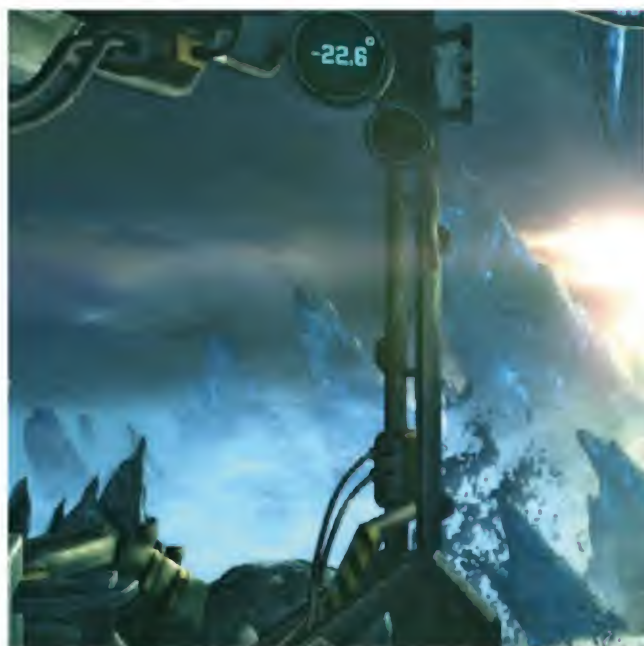


MULTIPLE MECHS

Lost Planet 2 was aggressively multiplayer-focused, to the detriment of the solo experience. Spark Unlimited has refined the idea for the sequel: multiplayer and co-op will return, but it won't be so focused on loot drops and making it impossible for those without friends to play. Not a bad idea, it's got to be said.

If we're honest, the idea of traipsing around a snowstorm-filled EDN III with other players sounds like the Best Thing Ever, or at least The Best Thing We've Heard Today. Details are still thin on the ground, but expect the campaign to be playable with at least one friend and the competitive multiplayer to return. And what more can you ask for, really?

3



4

OPENING IT UP

Although it's not going to be a completely open world, *Lost Planet 3* will enable you to choose, to a degree, where you go and what you do in the snowy tundra of EDN III. You'll be able to explore the harsh terrain in the Rig, but its range is limited, meaning you'll have to choose your path before exploring on foot.

Sure, it's not going to be anything revolutionary, but we like the idea. This world is meant to be imposing, and if Spark can make players have to choose between risk and reward when heading out into it then we'll be very interested indeed.

SOLDIERING ON

You're just a normal guy this time around. Does it show?



● This is Jim. He's a rig worker, aiming to make some quick cash.



● Although Jim's okay with a gun, try not to let the Akrid too close or it's QTE time.



● Jim's radio transmissions home are actually worth watching. In a *Lost Planet* game. What's going on?

PREVIEW

GEARS OF KIRK



RELEASE DATE: TBC 2013

Star Trek

Staaaar Trekking across the universe

PS3

OUR EXPERIENCE WITH

Star Trek extends as far as two things. First, the movie by JJ Abrams in 2009, which almost tricked us into thinking *Star Trek* was always about snappy dialogue and explosions rather than glacial pace and cardboard sets. Second, look up 'Worst Fight Scene Ever' on YouTube. That's it. That's the extent of our experience. To say we're not *Star Trek*'s target audience is a bit like saying Pot Noodles are not meant for fitness fanatics.

That experience will soon extend to three things, though, because *Star Trek* the game is looking awesome. And everyone appreciates a good game. That's why you're here, right? Of course.

The action begins when there's a sudden radio silence on New Vulcan. Suspecting the worst – how embarrassing if it was just that the radio batteries had run out – Kirk and Spock beam down to the new colony to investigate. Sure enough, they're set upon by manic Vulcans, and we're under way.

What immediately stands out is that this is a third-person shooter. That may sound like an odd fit, yet it proves perfect as a conduit for both the action and the co-op on show. Kirk is more of a run-and-gun character while Spock has analytic and tech skills. Inevitably, there will be set pieces where their individual skills are called upon.

For example, there's one section with a retracted bridge. Kirk tries to jump across but doesn't quite make it. Spock then hacks the computer to extend the bridge, saving Kirk. It'll add an extra bit of dynamic flair to drop-in/drop-out co-op.

The duo then work together to hack a door when they're attacked by the Gorn. Hey! Remember that 'Worst Fight Scene Ever' video we told you to look up? It's him! Sadly there is to be no polystyrene rocks or awkward hugging. This is a massive Gorn, with an arena battle forcing the two to fight it. The Gorn falls, Kirk and Spock escape while chased by countless enemies, and Kirk calls in the Enterprise to fire photon torpedoes.

It's fast, it's slick and, most of all, it's about the little touches. The animation is perfect, the interplay between Kirk and Spock is spot-on, and the gunplay is tight. The details are there for *Star Trek* fans too. The Enterprise is drenched with minute detail, of the sort you know must be perfect because they wouldn't dare risk the wrath of fans otherwise. We might not know Scotty from Spock – okay, maybe we know *that* much – but we know a good game when we see one. *Star Trek* looks like it will comfortably fit the bill.

Star Trek is being developed by the clever chaps and chappettes at Digital Extremes. Find out more at digitalextremes.com

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Faithful to the movie.
- Suitably atmospheric.
- The co-op play is tight.
- Reminds us of Worst Fight Scene Ever.

READ ME

Star Trek is the game of the forthcoming film, due next year, focusing on drop-in/drop-out co-op with Kirk and Spock in the leading roles.



WHERE IS IT SET?

Cestus III, duh

THE DEMO FEATURED the appearance of the Gorn in an arena battle echoing the events of 'Arena', an episode from *Star Trek: The Original Series*. So Cestus III could be the setting for at least one level. The production here is a bit slicker though.

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WHO WON



2012?

SONY, MICROSOFT, NINTENDO OR SOMEONE ELSE? NOWGAMER'S EDITOR IN CHIEF, NICK JONES, WEIGHS UP THIS YEAR'S SHOWING FOR THE BIG THREE



● Microsoft had a new *Halo* game. In other news, grass is green.

MICROSOFT

OVER THE PAST few years, Microsoft has shown a great talent for making it seem that Xbox 360 has more exclusives than anyone else, even if those games aren't exclusives at all.

This year was no different: by showing games like *Splinter Cell Blacklist*, *Tomb Raider* and, of course, *Black Ops II*, it gives the impression that these games are associated with Xbox 360 first and foremost. With three more actual exclusive games – *Halo 4*, *Forza Horizon* and *Gears Of War: Judgment* – on the surface, at least, it looks like Microsoft had a good line-up.

Problem is that, save for *Tomb Raider*, haven't we already played these games before? Can *Halo 4* really be that much different from *Halo: Reach*? Will developer People Can Fly bring anything new to the *Gears* franchise? The 'new' *Splinter Cell* looked just like the old, last-gen instalments. And they all have something in common: men shooting things.

Forza Horizon is slightly different, obviously, but, really, it's a style of racing game that Criterion and EA have been making for years.

And then we come to SmartGlass, something so obviously superfluous to games, movies, TV and the living room that even Microsoft's special guest Trey Parker ripped into it. Microsoft should have been happy the *South Park* creators didn't turn up wearing dresses and high on acid.

We already have the internet on our tablets and IMDb bookmarked. The idea that SmartGlass and Internet Explorer will turn every TV into a smart TV is nonsense.

Well, at least we can ask Bing questions in Spanish now.

The whole event had a 'treading water' feel to it. Next year will be all about the next Xbox, an exciting prospect in theory but not so much if all we're going to get is another *Halo*, another *Gears* and another *Forza*.

“Next year will be all about the next Xbox, an exciting prospect in theory but not so much if all we're going to get is another Halo, another Gears and another Forza”

RATING: C Five years ago an Xbox conference with this roll call of games would have been a straight A but now, at the end of a generation, it's getting a bit stale.



NINTENDO

THIS WAS THE year that Nintendo had to convince core gamers that its upcoming Wii U was for them. And it nearly did its part.

The Pro Controller might as well have been called the 'Call Of Duty Controller' or the 'GTA V Revolver', or something. That's how much of a 'come and get me' message it was to third-parties.

But the third-parties either weren't in or just didn't get the message. All, save Ubisoft, were content to only dip their toes in the Wii U water. No one wanted to dive in.

Even *Batman: Arkham City*'s new Armored Edition failed to really show that the Wii U's GamePad can make core games better. Retrofitting an old game was hardly the way to show innovation. These things need to be designed from the ground up! Don't they read their own press releases?

Do you know what Nintendo really needed? A list. A definitive list of 30 key third-party games confirmed for Wii U this year: *FIFA*, *Call Of Duty*, *Medal Of Honor*, *Battlefield*, *Need For Speed*, *Just Dance*, *PES*, *Madden*, *Max Payne*, *Formula 1*, *Sonic*, *Final Fantasy*.

Assassin's Creed III was a good start but without some of the above, it'll be business as usual for a Wii-branded Nintendo console.

First-party-wise, Nintendo also had problems. *Pikmin 3* and *Nintendo Land* are fine for the core Nintendo fan, but where was the blockbuster game? Where was *Zelda*? Or *Super Mario Galaxy 3*? Where was the killer



• *Pikmin 3* was the only real surprise on show.

app that would make Wii U a must-buy this Christmas?

It wasn't all bad for Nintendo, though. 'Asymmetric gaming' or 1-vs-4 gaming is an interesting notion. This weighted multiplayer has the potential to widen the potential appeal of competitive gaming.

Miiverse was the best thing Nintendo showed. As a social networking layer on top of gaming, it would offer little that Xbox Live and even Twitter don't do already, but the fact that it's woven into the fabric of the games has potential. Like the system in *Demon's Souls* and *Dark Souls* where players can leave hints for each other and even 'phase' into other people's games, this kind of social multiplayer gaming has huge potential. Especially when backed by the creative minds at Nintendo.

Still, this has to be seen as a missed opportunity. With Microsoft in between consoles and Sony just about reaching a plateau in terms of PlayStation 3 quality, this was the perfect time to see the famous Nintendo difference.

Nintendo probably didn't have much choice in terms of what it did show; there's no doubt everything it had was shown, which may suggest that even Nintendo isn't ready for the Wii U launch.

If that's true, then how can it expect the rest of the industry to be?

RATING: C Nintendo's failure to convince of third-party support could have wider implications for the Wii U's long-term appeal.



• Not an old shot of *The Last Of Us*, but the real Ellen Page in *Beyond*.

SONY

THE AMAZING THING about Sony's press conference was that it announced not one but two new IPs. That hardly ever happens at E3.

David Cage's *Beyond: Two Souls* is exactly the kind of game that Sony loves because it proves the company cares about the art of games as well as the business. It'll probably be as interesting as Cage's last movie/game, *Heavy Rain*, and probably sell as many PlayStations. In other words, not too many.

Even though *The Last Of Us* is a new IP, there was a familiar *Uncharted* feel to it. The look, the character wise-cracks, the industry-best game design: all hallmarks of Sony's jewel in the crown developer, Naughty Dog.

At just four months old, PS Vita was strangely neglected, but there were

two announcements of significance: an exclusive *Assassin's Creed* game and an exclusive *Call Of Duty* game. If PS Vita has a chance of actually competing with Nintendo's 3DS, then two of the biggest third-party franchises of this generation should give it a decent chance. But nothing is certain in the handheld market.

The tie-in with JK Rowling was surprising and interesting. Anything *Potter*-branded does ridiculous business, and it could be that this type of product is what can spark Move into life. Its market certainly isn't the people who play *Killzone*.

Overall, Sony must be pleased with its showing. Compared to the tired, uninspiring Xbox showing, it was fresh, and it showed innovation and ideas.

RATING: B Ignoring the PS Vita was just rude but with two new IPs, Sony at least had something fresh to talk about.

THE WINNER

So we picked Sony as the winner of E3 2012, but maybe we were a bit hasty. Maybe this year, it wasn't one of the big three that won. Maybe it was the company that was ever-present at the big three's conferences, and had its own pretty damn good conference as well.

Ubisoft's *Assassin's Creed III* games underpinned both Sony's third-party PS3 and PS Vita announcements, it had Nintendo's only new triple-A third-party Wii U games in *ZombiU* and *Rayman*, and its new *Splinter Cell* game was one of Microsoft's big reveals.

And then there was *Watch Dogs*. If not game of the show, then certainly the unexpected pleasant surprise of the show.

So maybe it was Ubisoft that stole the limelight. But then there was the Tobuscus debacle, and Sony had *Beyond* and *The Last Of Us*. Hell, let's give Ubisoft a B and call it a draw.

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REVIEWS

We play games and give them a score



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Spec Ops: The Line

The horror! The horror!
All right, it's not that bad

PS3

Spec Ops: The Line is confused in what it wants to present to players. On one hand there's an unflinching approach to the portrayal of the horror and confusion of war, while on the other hand there are heads that literally pop from a single pistol shot. On a rogue third hand there are moral quandaries and the question of just where loyalty ends and how far the concept of duty stretches, while on the horribly deformed fourth hand the game comes with a special FUBAR Edition.

In a few ways, *The Line* does manage to be something more than the sum of its parts – it's not home to a story of incredible depth, but it does feature one that offers something a little bit more interesting and fleshed-out than the usual fare. It approaches thoughtful territory once or twice, and it even shocks in one particular scene. This narrative ambition does a job of making *The Line* far more memorable than it would have been otherwise, but it doesn't make it a good game.

For all its bluster about setting itself apart from the crowd, how *The Line* is 'mature' and whatever else, it's a game you know before you've even taken your first step on the sand-covered streets of Dubai. If you were to look up the dictionary definition of 'a totally uninspired take on the third-person, cover-based shooter'



DETAILS

Publisher
2K Games
Developer
Yager Development
Price
£49.99
Players
1-8
Genre
Third-person shooter
Age Rating
18+
Website
specopsthegame.com
Twitter
@2kgames
Facebook
www.facebook.com/specops



then, well, you'd be wasting your time because it won't be in there. But if it was in there, it would show you a picture of *Spec Ops: The Line*'s front cover.

For all the grand promises of a dynamic battlefield, reshaped by the brutal sandstorms hitting Dubai, there's little dynamism on show beyond the odd chance to shoot out some glass and drown your enemies in sand. Comparisons to *Red Faction* and *Fracture* were, we can safely say, premature at best. No, this is linear, straightforward stuff. You are funnelled from encounter to encounter to take your customary position behind a waist-high wall, popping up every now and then to eviscerate one of the hundreds of anti-self-preservation campaigners you seem to be battling. Aside from the ability to off your enemies with a sea of sand every now and then, there's the chance to... no... well, there's that feature where you... hmm... you can press a special combination and... ah.

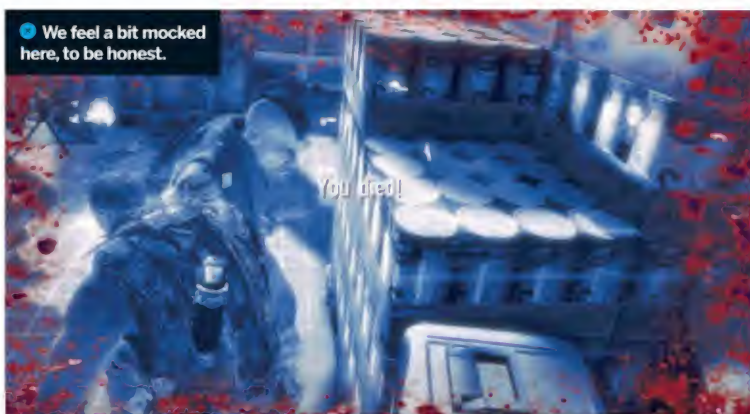
Nope – this is uninspired. Boring, even. Combat is snappy enough, sufficiently simple to be enjoyed by players of any level, and with enough extras – squad orders, basically – to keep things that teeny-tiny bit more interesting than they would be otherwise. But it doesn't change the fact that you're playing this game, again, and there is little about the mechanics themselves to actually keep your interest for any amount of time. It's the sort of game that opens on a mounted gun section, for the love of all that is, isn't or might possibly be holy – that's the level of uninspiration we're talking here.

You might think that would result in a lower number at the end of these words – if the game is boring and brings nothing new to the table, we are to tear it a new one, si? But the aforementioned story, the setting, a



few decisions by the developers manage to keep interest levels higher than they would otherwise be. It doesn't save *The Line* from the ignominy of its status as one of the games you won't remember in six months, but at least it tries. We reward that, because it's something to reward.

But even the narrative – the setting and the enemies you face – struggles in its own logic thanks to the mechanics of the game. Minor spoiler, but you face off against fellow US troops in the game. It's a tiny bit of a shock and your character and his squad react accordingly: they don't want to kill their brothers. But while the protestations of your men are still ringing in your ears, while Nolan North is still justifying cutting down an American soldier because it was 'self-defence', you – the player – are capable of carrying out 'execution' moves on these very same people you're apparently struggling to come to terms with having to murder. As in, close-combat, hyper-violent insta-kills. You're supposed to be against the concept of killing US troops, but that doesn't stop you from beating them to death with the butt of your rifle, rather than just disabling them in some way.

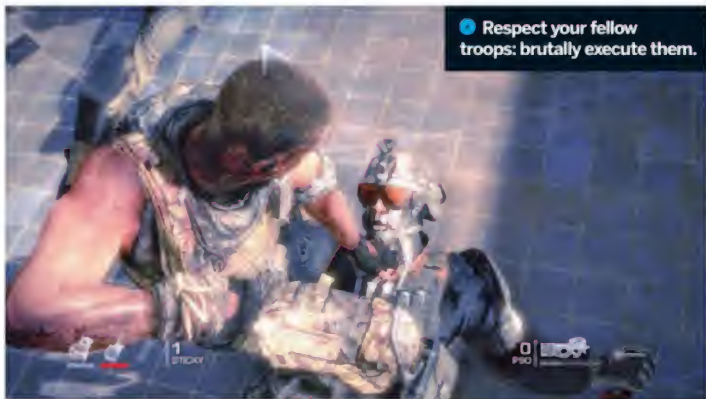




BLAND SAND

With some colourful mirages

YOU WOULD BE forgiven for expecting *The Line* to look as uninspiring as the most dull, brown games of this generation. Mainly because it does. But there are times, every now and then, where things change – you go indoors, you take a look around an aquarium or a hotel, and the opulence of your once-rich setting shines through. And at these points, in the middle of a brownish-yellow battleground of absolutely nothing memorable, you suddenly encounter environments that remind you of *BioShock*. And you are confused. Though ever so slightly impressed and relieved to momentarily be free of sand.



That might seem pernickety, and it is, but it's elements like this that take away from the overall effect of the game. You see the effects of white phosphorus in quite some detail, revealing the true horror of such an insanely inhumane weapon. But then you gib five soldiers with your handy-dandy grenade launcher you've just picked up while your character yells some rah rah nonsense line about 'takin' 'em down'. It's as if the adults read *Heart Of Darkness* and decided their game should be influenced by it, but then chose to vaguely explain the concept to a group of gore-hungry 14-year-olds who went on to actually make the game. A hugely missed opportunity.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

What would be a ridiculously bland and forgettable experience is rendered that little bit less so through a fairly interesting setting and narrative. But it's still not very good at all, and not particularly worth your time. Unless you're really bored.

59%



Previously...
in Play



Spec Ops: Stealth Patrol Issue 64
We were insane in the past, clearly, as this was a terrible game. 85%

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Game Of Thrones

In the game of thrones, you get bored, or you stop playing. Or both



PS3 Picture the scene: you're making an RPG tied to the world of a popular, but still resolutely non-mainstream, series of fantasy novels. You're beaver away, taking your time, expecting to release only on PC, get your product out there and have moderate commercial and critical success.

Then the blasted property gets adapted into a big-budget HBO TV series and it does that thing that always surprises people with fantasy-based fiction: it gets popular. Really popular.

Suddenly your faithful, modest re-creation of a world that not too many people really cared about is attached to an entirely separate behemoth. The big boys waded in, decisions are made, and all of a sudden your RPG has to be big. It has to compete.

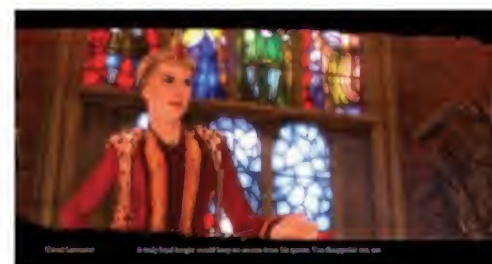


It has to feature talent from the TV show. Your project, which predates the televisual equivalent by a fair few years, now has to be a blockbuster.

Game Of Thrones, the PS3 RPG, is not a blockbuster. It feels like little more than a rather poorly constructed budget game thrust unwittingly into the limelight. If the TV series didn't exist, this would likely have seen a low-key PC release, a cult following of those willing to overlook its many faults, and it being utterly forgotten before the year is out.

But the TV show has happened, and the resulting attention lavished on this adaptation of *Game Of Thrones* will do nothing but harm it in the long run. Sure, there will be more sales as a result of people buying anything with the name of the books on it, but there will be more people feeling thoroughly let down by the game as a knock-on effect. But why?

Because despite the rich source material here, the *Game Of Thrones* game is a poor man's *Dragon Age: Origins*. It's a stilted and overly traditional RPG, complete with confusing exploration, slow combat that lacks in feedback, plenty of under-the-hood dice rolls, sharp difficulty



DETAILS

Publisher
Focus Home Interactive
Developer
Cyanide Studio
Price
£44.99
Players
1
Genre
Role-playing game
Age Rating
15+
Website
gameofthrones-rpg.com
Twitter
@CyanideStudio
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on.fb.me/KHqoGA

spikes, and little in the way of an engaging or exciting time to be had.

Telling a story that runs parallel to the events of the first book, the game contains a few recognisable characters but generally avoids crossing over with the source material. It's not a captivating tale, though at least allowing control of two characters keeps some things a bit fresher than they would have otherwise been.

But generally speaking, *Game Of Thrones* is lacking. It's dull, it's not learned lessons from contemporary RPGs, and it isn't home to the epic nature you'd associate with the novels or TV show.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

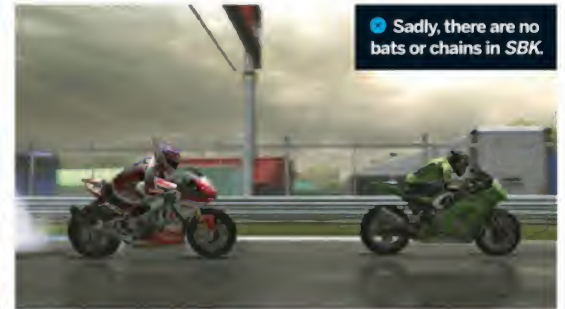
Contains none of the epic scale or blockbuster production values of the TV show, little of what makes the books so captivating and nothing of what makes modern RPGs the sort of thing you'd sink 100+ hours into. A shame.

39%





The game is never this exciting. Ever.



Try not to chop your way through corners, or you'll be off before you know it.



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW



DETAILS

Publisher
Black Bean
Developer
Milestone
Price
£29.99
Players
1-16
Genre
Racing
Age Rating
PEGI 3
Website
www.milestone.it
Twitter
N/A
Facebook
N/A



Do you like racing games? Yes? Good, good, you're in the right place. Do you like racing games that enable you to tinker around with your ride, adjusting it until it's just right, getting your mechanic face on? If yes again, this is certainly the place for you.

If you happen to like immediately accessible, arcadey thrills, however, then get out. You're not welcome here. *SBK Generations* is serious business, and is both dull and oddly appealing as a result.

As the name suggests, the package contains four seasons' worth of racing geekery, from 2009 to this year. Also featured is everything you'd expect from an officially licensed title: riders, teams, a career mode that spans the seasons, and a new SBK Experience mode that sees you compete in different events, invitationals and the like. Despite the fact that graphically it looks like it was programmed on a toaster, there's an inherent appeal to this authenticity.

As exciting to the average gamer as eating an entire loaf of dry wholemeal bread

As there is to the actual racing, which, despite being as exciting to the average gamer as eating an entire loaf of dry wholemeal bread, is, after a while, strangely engaging. At first you'll probably spend most of your time either falling off the bike, overshooting corners or simply swearing at the screen for what seems to be a desperately unfair – and not very fun – set of rules and physics. Then, after a couple of hours, you'll be following the racing line, weaving in and out of corners, overtaking with reckless abandon and generally 'getting' the game.

Nothing exciting ever really happens, but there is a satisfaction in controlling both your bike and your impulse to go at top speed the whole time, and hence finishing the race.

SBK is an unforgiving game, but it's not necessarily unfair, and figuring out its rules is... fun? Maybe not, but it is something.

When it comes down to it, though, we can't really recommend *SBK* to anyone other than serious petrolheads, and even then only because it's so effective in stimulating that OCD aspect of your brain. Even so, if you happen to own any of the other *SBK* games that have been doing the rounds then you're pretty much set, unless you absolutely can't live without up-to-date rosters and the like.

Steve Burns

VERDICT

Fundamentally dry, but learn to appreciate its way of doing things and there is some enjoyment to be had. A sound racing sim now bogged down in late-generation stagnation. The next gen can't come soon enough for Milestone and Black Bean.

54%



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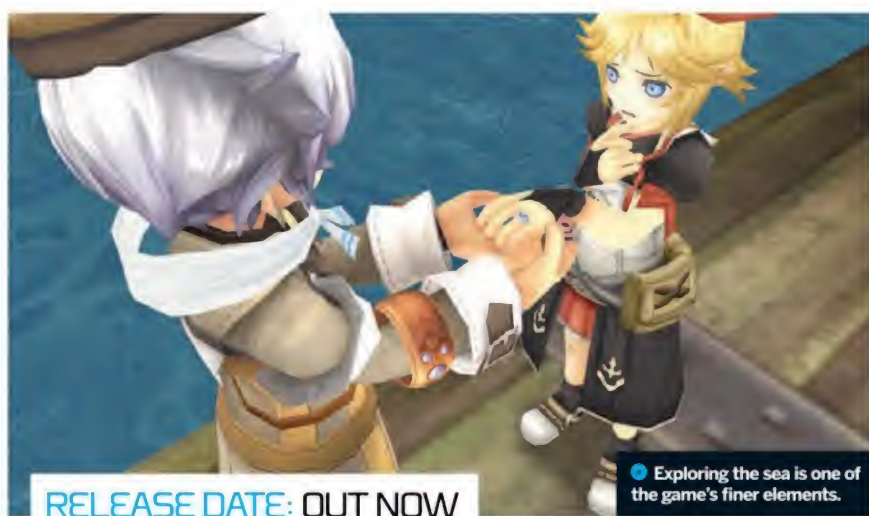


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RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Rune Factory Oceans

Sun, sea and... swords



Publisher Rising Star Developer Neverland Price £39.99
Players 1 Genre JRPG Age Rating 12+ Website bit.ly/Jlq5tV
Twitter @RisingStarGames Facebook facebook.com/RisingStarGames

And you thought MGS4's opening had too many cut-scenes.

The first hour or so of *Rune Factory Oceans* is like cajoling an excitable, if nervous, puppy into having fun. There it is, off in its own little world, occasionally stopping to make sure it's okay to continue, before barrelling off again.

Bizarre dog-related metaphors aside, if you're a fan of any game with design principles initiated after 1876 then you're going to have a bad time. Like most JRPGs, it takes aaaaaaages to get going, and we almost fell asleep three times during this build-up.

Overcome this – and we're sure that if you've bought this game you're willing to put the time in – and you'll find a game that ticks all the usual boxes but fails to elicit much excitement. There's the usual cast of cute characters who are incapable of finishing a sentence without you pressing (X), the dialogue is terrible, it looks like a PS2 game, and you'll be fetch-questing until the cows come home.

High spots include travelling the ocean with your golem, discovering new lands and duking it out with sea monsters as you do so. Like the distantly related *Harvest Moon* series, you'll be getting your agriculture face on as well, but let's be honest here: you know what you're getting. For those committed to the game there's fun to be had, even if it is frustratingly obtuse in its mechanics sometimes, and the real-time combat won't blow your mind. Everyone else, however, will probably get ten minutes in and wonder why they didn't just buy *Call Of Duty* instead.

Steve Burns

VERDICT

It is what it is, and you know what you're getting. Showing its age both mechanically and visually, there's still fun to be had here if you've got the patience and the right mindset. It'll send everyone else to sleep, however.

51%



PSN reviews



SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 4: EPISODE II

Remember when Sonic was unmissable? Us neither

Publisher Sega Developer Dimps Price £9.99 Players 1-2 Genre Platformer



DON'T BOTHER. THAT'S the easiest way to sum up whether you should buy *Sonic 4: Episode II* or not. Because it is *work*. Don't get us wrong: if you're a fan of frustrating, inconsistent, slow, cheap and all-out rage-inducing platform games that aren't as good as ones that came out 20 years ago, go right ahead. Everyone else not in that demographic – which, in fairness, seems rather large given the rubbish that fans of the series will put up with – should steer clear. *Sonic's* beauty is in its speed-based simplicity, but *Episode II* jams in a load of poorly implemented power-ups and special moves that slow the game down and aren't used properly. It's also terribly signposted and horribly inconsistent. Get *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* to see how these games should be done.

40%



VIRTUA FIGHTER 5: FINAL SHOWDOWN

The grandmaster returns

Publisher Sega Developer Sega AM2 Price £9.99 Players 1-2 Genre Fighting



YOU WON'T FIND Ken setting people on fire with Dragon Punches, or Hulk calling meteors from the sky, or Jack comboing people against walls. *Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown* is a purist fighter, with all the fat trimmed so there are no gimmicks in its lightning-fast brawling, focused around mid/low/throw guessing games. It's nice to have a fighting game that's cheap in the financial sense rather than the god-damn-it-I'm-really-pissed-off sense, and the balance ensures fights feel fair, not farcical. Some may find it a bit dry and you'll tire of single-player, but for those prepared to take the fight online or with friends willing to play, this is as good as it gets.

90%



PIXELJUNK 4AM

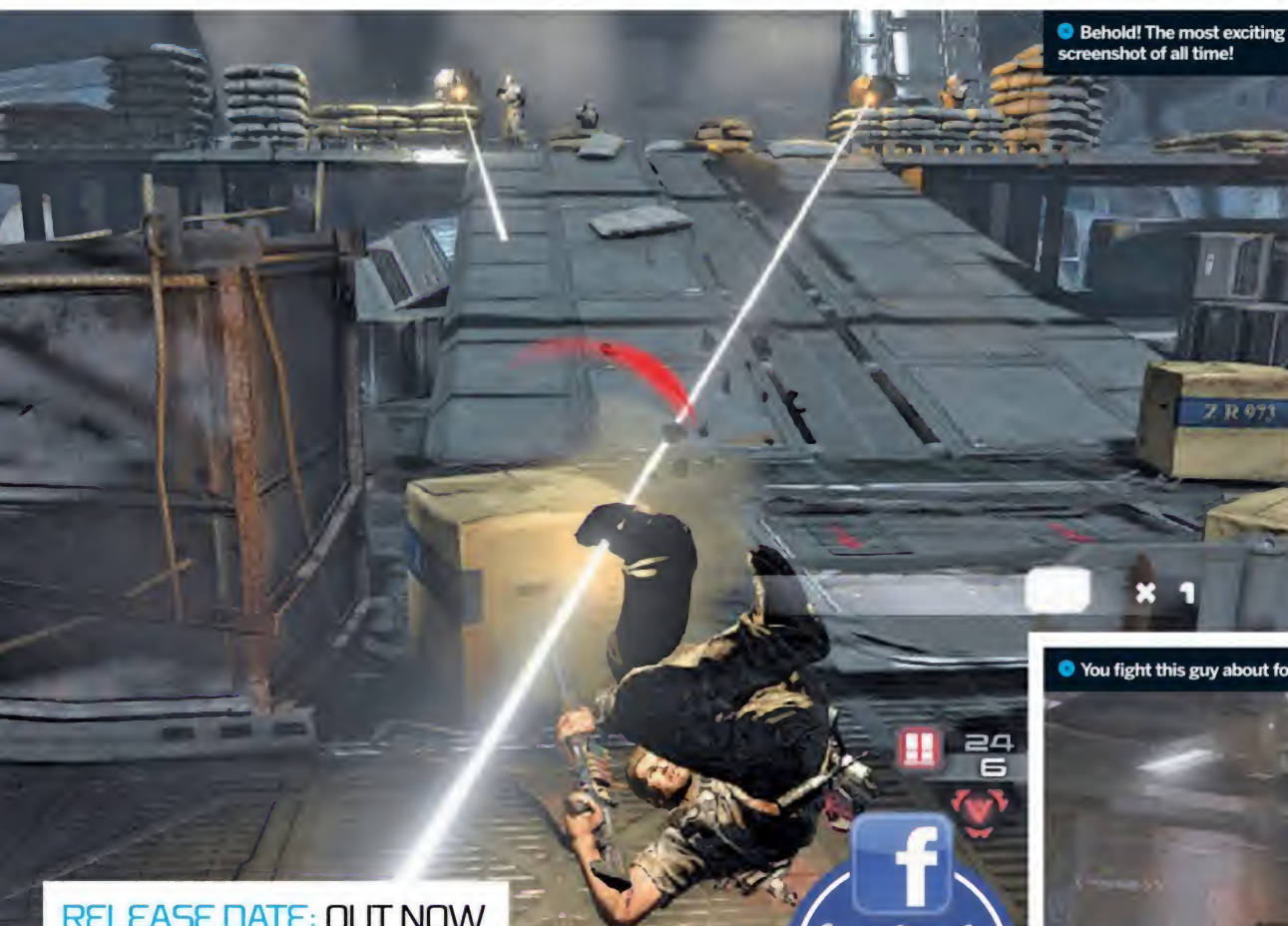
Ooooh, it's a hard game to review

Publisher SCEE Developer Ion Storm Price £6.49 Players 1 Genre Music



ON THE SCALE of 'things we're not entirely sure how to review', *PixelJunk 4am* is right up there. It's a music visualiser with Move-controlled interaction, allowing you to switch between four choices on four tracks and add reverb, distortion and other effects. The music you produce is mainly automated, so you'll never make something that sounds terrible, but it does mean you're often not sure what you're actually doing. There are no goals, no scores, nothing to aim for besides having your 'show' livestreamed through the game. There's a running tally of your 'crowd' measured but that's it. Best thought of as a music visualiser, not a game.

40%



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Inversion

"Gravity is a habit that is hard to shake off"



DETAILS

Publisher
Namco Bandai
Developer
Saber Interactive
Price
£39.99
Players
1-4
Genre
Third-person shooter
Age Rating
18+
Website
www.namco
bandaigames.com/
console/inversion
Twitter
@TweetsSaber
Facebook
www.facebook.com/
Inversion

PS3

If the manipulation of gravity element was done right, it could turn *Inversion* into something more than a forgettable *Gears Of War* clone. It's not really been done right.

Inversion is, yes, a forgettable *Gears Of War* clone, albeit one with vague hints at trying to be something greater, though these allusions are never really acted upon.

To describe what you get up to in *Inversion* would be to explain something that sends you into an instant coma. If you don't know what you're doing in it, you haven't played a game in the last seven years. If you think the base-level mechanics are anything other than derivative, dull crap then you have very strange opinions indeed and we would recommend you have a long, hard think about what you're doing with your life.

Anyway, on to the grand disappointment that comes when you genuinely hoped an element of a game would be brilliantly done

Inversion is a forgettable *Gears Of War* clone, albeit one with vague hints at something greater

and has instead turned out to be a huge missed opportunity. Even with four decades in development and it being the single thing in the game that hasn't changed at all since day one, the manipulation of gravity is underwhelming. In many sections of the game it's downright reductive to the experience.

Players are capable of attacking enemies with light or heavy gravity, lifting them up or forcing them to the ground respectively, and these powers can also be used on some objects to turn them into projectiles, cover or platforms for access. Unlocking the ability to fling cars is reasonably exciting, but you've seen all of this before in the likes of *The Force Unleashed*, *Dead Space* and so on – it's nothing new, and it's nothing particularly

interesting. Certainly not something you would expect the entire focus of a game to be on.

But wait! Vectors change, meaning what was the floor now

becomes the ceiling, while the ceiling is now your cover-based shooting arena. And what does that do? Well, it means the toilets are sometimes upside down while you're blandly shooting bland enemies in bland combat. That's about it.

But wait again! The promise of zero-gravity sections had us hopeful, but again it's a letdown. There's just so little freedom in these areas that it actually makes it even less open than the traditional run-and-gunning going on elsewhere. Later on things open up a bit and hint at three-dimensional combat that could have been great, but it never really goes anywhere. That's a shame, because it leaves *Inversion* feeling neutered and pointless.

Ian Dransfield

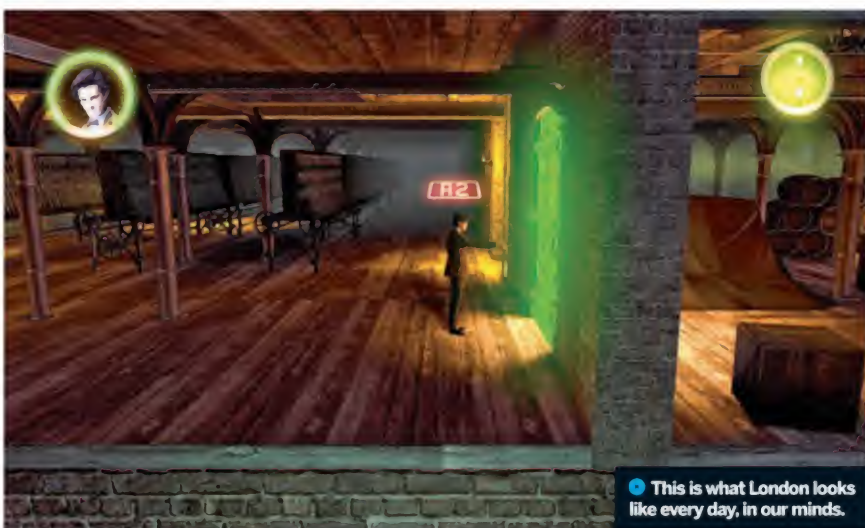


VERDICT

Inversion flirts with the idea of having ideas, but then gives up all pretence of inventiveness and settles for being a bland and forgettable third-person shooter. It's inoffensive enough, but it's pretty much impossible to recommend in any real way.

49%





This is what London looks like every day, in our minds.



River Song doesn't kill; she hypno-kisses. Obviously.

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock

Knock, knock. Who's there? Doctor. Doctor Who? SHUT UP



PS3

Publisher BBC Worldwide Digital Entertainment Developer Supermassive Games Price £24.99 Players 1-2 Genre Platformer/puzzle Age Rating 12+ Website bit.ly/uCmyaq Twitter @DoctorWhoTEC Facebook on.fb.me/LD3jba

Doctor Who: the show for all the family, the game that brings everyone together in front of the TV to enjoy some 2D platforming and puzzle action. Or something like that. It's an honourable endeavour, no doubt, but it's just carried out... poorly.

You want to be kind – there's an element of *The Eternity Clock* that smacks of being a labour of love. But even if you ignore the fact that it's boring, recycling the same kinds of puzzles over and over and offering the sort of action that just doesn't thrill in the slightest, ever – even if you do ignore that, there's the fact that it's glitchy and buggy as a glitchy and buggy thing.

On more than one occasion we encountered game-breakers, meaning we needed to quit out and start again for no discernible reason. Then there's getting stuck in animation loops, your AI partner going walkabout – obviously

a curable issue when playing with another human – and a general sense of confusion as to what the hell you're supposed to be doing half the time.

There's no doubting this is a fine representation of the source material – it's scripted wittily, acted well and presented in a recognisable fashion. It's just a boring game that would have scored higher were it not for technical issues that pretty much ruin things.

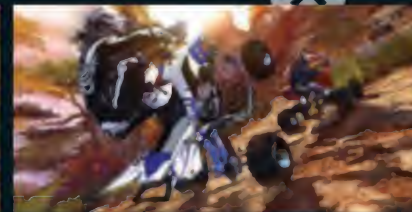
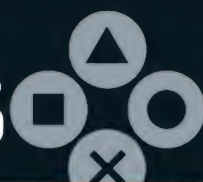
Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

We would be forgiving toward the rather bland action and samey puzzles were it not for the unforgivable bugs we encountered numerous times. Still, it looks the part and raises a few smirks, so fans of the Doctor might let its problems slide.

32%

PSN reviews



MAD RIDERS

From the studio that brought you Dead Island...

Publisher Ubisoft Developer Techland Release date Out now Price £7.99 Players 1-12 Genre Racing

PSN

HEY, LOOK. IT'S another ATV racing game. Let's all not get really excited at all. Okay, so *Mad Riders*, while not as mad as it claims to be, is a fair bit of fun taken in isolation. It's quick, responsive, reasonably over-the-top and keeps you playing for longer than you might expect. Taken out of isolation, though, there's the question of why exactly it exists. *Mad Riders* does absolutely nothing that hasn't been done elsewhere, leaving it with one main selling point: it doesn't cost very much. But then, neither does the game that betters *Mad Riders*, Black Rock Studio's *Pure*, which can be picked up for a pittance these days. Opt for that if you haven't already; otherwise you could do worse than *Mad Riders*.

70%



HARLEY QUINN'S REVENGE

Mr J would be so disappointed

Publisher Warner Bros Developer Rocksteady Price £9.99 Players 1 Genre Action

DLC

THE GREATEST JOY of *Arkham City* was the invention bleeding through its DNA – the Mr Freeze brawl, Catwoman's 'bad' ending and so on. That deft touch is absent here, a run-of-the-mill outing that takes two hours to finish and feels like the product of the Rocksteady B-team studying *Arkham City* with good intentions but with no idea of what made it tick. There's nothing particularly wrong with it, but nor is there anything right. Robin is Batman with different gadgets, Harley Quinn feels like a supporting actress in what should be her spotlight role, and the ending is abrupt and unsatisfying. Odd and strangely unengaging.

55%



WONDER BOY IN MONSTER LAND

Do you really like it?

Publisher Sega Developer In-house Price £3.69 Players 1 Genre Action RPG

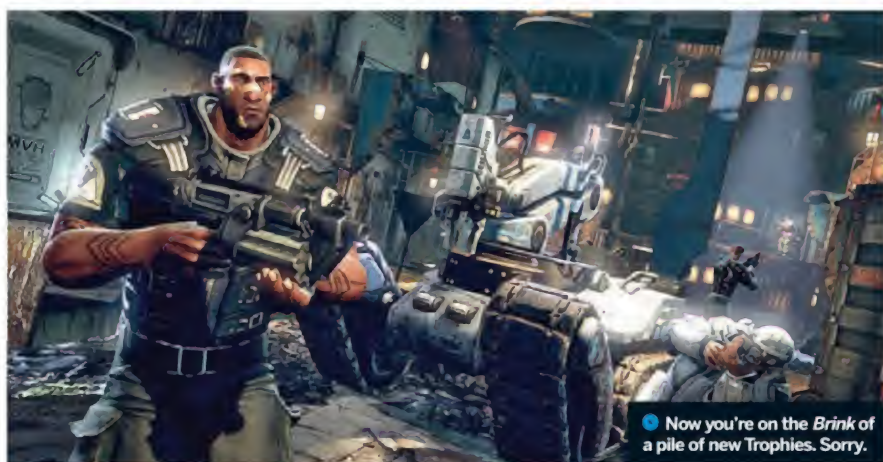
PSN

IT'S A BIT of a cop-out score, 50%. It's because we have no idea if you'll like *Wonder Boy In Monster Land*. It has in-game instruction manuals with original artwork, nice menus, and it's perfectly emulated. These things matter. Wonder Boy walks at geriatric speed, you have no idea what items you're buying at each shop, and everything is a bit plodding. These things also matter. It's a little slow to draw in today's wham-bam crowd, so the score reflects those coming in cold. Those who played *Wonder Boy* when younger, you already know what score you think it should deserve, and this port does nothing to detract from that.

50%

151 TROPHIES IN 24 HOURS

Does your flagging Trophy level need a desperate quick fix? If you're brave enough, we have a punishing 24-hour schedule to nab you a staggering **151** Trophies...



Now you're on the Brink of a pile of new Trophies. Sorry.

1-3 HOURS

TOTAL TROPHIES 16

DUKE NUKEM FOREVER, BRINK, THE WALKING DEAD

Platinum: 0 Gold: 1 Silver: 4 Bronze: 11

To get your adventure started, we need a symbol. A sign of the journey to come. Load up **Duke Nukem Forever**, head to the toilets and steal some poo from the toilets (Turd Burglar – Bronze) for your first Trophy. Then draw something on the whiteboard (Drawings – Bronze), drink a beer in 'The Duke Cave' (Flagon Of Chuckles – Bronze), take steroids in the same place (Juiced – Bronze) and shoot the overhead blimp down during the first boss fight (Sunday, Black Sunday – Bronze).

easy enough and when defending an objective, wait for an attacker to try to complete a primary objective and kill him (That's How You Win A Match – Silver).



That shouldn't take you too long, so you can round off the time by completing **The Walking Dead: Episode 1**, which awards you all the Trophies as you make it through to the end, regardless of the decisions you make or how you play. Have some fun with it.



Brink also awards you a host of Trophies simply for knowing how to press buttons, pretty much. Completing all the one-star challenges (Well Done! and Who's Bad? – both Silver) and a three-star challenge (Very Well Done Indeed – Silver) is



4-6 HOURS

TOTAL TROPHIES 28

BACK TO THE FUTURE EPISODE 1: IT'S ABOUT TIME

Platinum: 0 Gold: 1 Silver: 4 Bronze: 7



While we're on Telltale, **Back To The Future** also yields easy, quick Trophies. However, some can be missed. You have to perfectly recite dialogue from the original movie in the opening cut-scene, so pick "Disintegrated Einstein" and "Built a time machine out of a DeLorean?" (Deja Marty – Bronze). When in Edna Strickland's home, examine the pictures on the wall until Edna comments on the Marshall Strickland picture (Fate In Flux – Bronze). When you travel back in time to Thirties Hill Valley, read the sign above the law firm before heading over to Doc (Hi Bob! – Bronze). When you talk to Doc in jail, ask him "Where've you been?", "How's the family?", "Where'd the

DeLorean come from?" in order (A Plausible Explanation – Bronze). This leaves the only tricky Trophy as the one where you have to mix the rocket fuel flawlessly, but as long as you listen to Emmett's commands when he places emphasis on the words hinting at what to do, you should be fine. If you get it wrong and Emmett has to come down to talk to you, hit **SELECT** and reload that section (Fuelmaster – Bronze).





7-9 HOURS

TOTAL TROPHIES 42

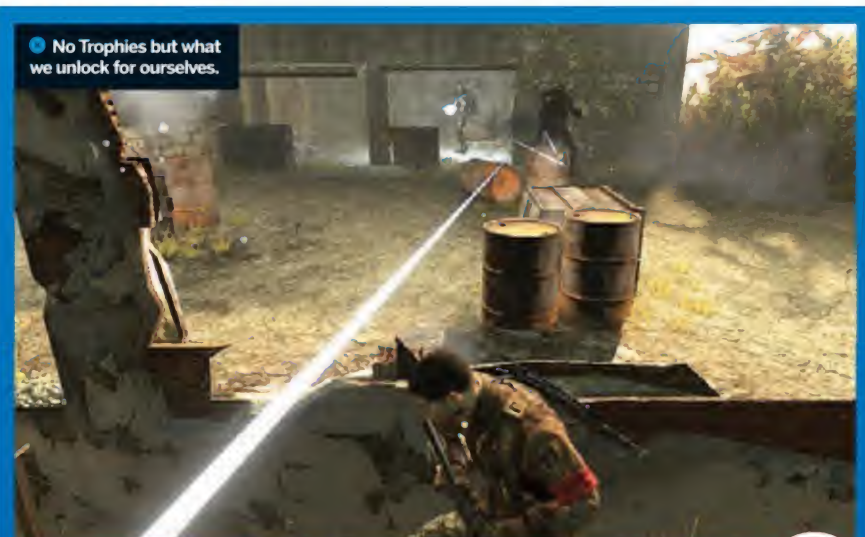
SAINTS ROW: THE THIRD, TEKKEN 6

Platinum: 0 Gold: 0 Silver: 2 Bronze: 12

Before you can begin nabbing Trophies in **Saints Row: The Third**, you have to get the opening two missions done (Dead Presidents and The Welcome Wagon – both Bronze). You then get to create your character, so make sure you customise him/her online before quitting (Jumped In – Bronze). Shoot someone in the balls so you get the nutshot notification, then click in **PS** next to them to finish them off (Ow My Balls! – Bronze). Hijack 50 cars using the sprint and **△** combo to jump through the windshield to quickly hit your target (Bo-Duke-En – Bronze). Once you've started earning respect, bring up your cell phone and buy an upgrade from, unsurprisingly, 'Upgrades' (A Better Person – Bronze). Finally, kill 25 people with your fists or by clicking **PS** to complete the first challenge (Shake And Bake – Bronze).

You can also blitz **Tekken 6** for some easy Trophies. Scenario Campaign mode yields easy ones for clearing the tutorial (Learning Is Fun – Bronze) and killing any enemy with a picked-up weapon (Give Your Fists A Rest – Bronze). Likewise, **Tekken 6**'s online modes, which yield Trophies simply for playing three matches online (Fighting Amateur – Bronze), ten matches online (Fighting Enthusiast – Bronze) and then 30 matches online (Fighting Master – Silver). You don't even have to win. When playing through Arcade mode, NANCY appears as a bonus stage boss, which can be tricky. Put the difficulty on Easy, pick Paul, keep side-stepping and do his quarter-circle towards and **△**

'deathfist' move whenever an opening appears. It's tricky, but keep the pressure up and you should beat NANCY (Machine Crusher – Silver). Then all that's left is to beat Azazel to nab the last easy, quick Trophy from **Tekken 6** (Arcade Addict – Bronze).



10-12 HOURS

TOTAL TROPHIES 54

TERMINATOR SALVATION

Platinum: 1 Gold: 11 Silver: 0 Bronze: 0

Notorious for being the easiest Platinum on PlayStation 3, getting **Terminator Salvation** done in three hours is pushing it a little but is perfectly doable. As far as Trophies go, you need to complete the game on Hard to unlock them all, as this will also unlock the Trophy for clocking **Terminator Salvation** on Medium difficulty. None of the Trophies are missable when you play through, so you just need to concentrate on making it to the end.

The AI has been designed to allow for flanking tactics, so you'll notice they'll focus their attention on your allies a lot, allowing you to creep around the back of them. As long as you stay in cover and flank wherever possible, you won't have too many issues pushing through. Remember that T-7s have to be shot in their exposed back to do any

damage, at which point they'll spin around to face you. This means they expose their backs to your allies but, frustratingly, they don't seem to do much damage. The way to reset this situation is to rejoin your allies, thus refocusing the T-7's attention on them, and therefore allowing you to creep back around behind it.

The only real threat are the T-600 cyborgs, so it's good to carry a rocket launcher, grenades and pipe bombs whenever possible, only saving them for the T-600. If you want to conserve these weapons, one explosion from a rocket or grenade will open up their chests, allowing you to damage them with normal weapons. The only hard parts in **Terminator Salvation** involve these enemies. Oh, and right at the end of the game, don't fight – just keep running forward. And there you go – easy Trophies and the easiest Platinum on any PlayStation 3 game.





● HD collections are usually quite stingy on Trophies, but *Sly Cooper* has some easy ones.

13-15 HOURS

SLY COOPER, BURNOUT PARADISE, DAYTONA USA

Platinum: 0 Gold: 1 Silver: 4 Bronze: 19

Sly Cooper kicks a Trophy your way for starting the game (Sucker Punched – Bronze), another for collecting the police file in the story's opening (Foxy Lady – Bronze), one more for progressing in the first mission (Learn The Ropes – Bronze) and three when you collect 99 coins before the first chapter is done (Coin Collector, Coin Recycler and Coins, Coins Everywhere! – all Bronze).

Burnout Paradise also gets you started with some quick-fire Trophies. Head to the Auto Repair at the game's start (Repair Your Car – Bronze), win your first race (Win A Race – Bronze), drive through three Billboards (Smash 3 Burnout Billboards – Bronze), beat the Nakamura SI-7 after winning your third event (Shutdown The Nakamura SI-7 – Bronze), get your third Takedown (Perform 3 Takedowns – Bronze) and send an online invite (Invite A Friend To Join You In Paradise City – Bronze).

After the scorching racing of *Burnout Paradise* comes PSN's **Daytona USA**. You should be able to grab all Trophies in under an hour. Beat the Beginner (First Place Beginner – Silver), Advanced (First Place Advanced – Silver) and Expert courses (First Place Expert – Gold) for the first round of Trophies. On the Beginner course, press in front of the spinning reels three times (Slot Machine – Bronze), on the Advanced course do a 180 at the start and scoot up the ramp for a secret message (You Just Lost Your... – Bronze) and keep pressing in front of Jeffrey on the Expert course (Flipmode – Bronze). Now you just need to smash your car and drive into the pit (Repair Hornet – Bronze), upload any Time Trial score (Rank In – Bronze), complete a single challenge (Challenge Clear – Bronze), hit 100 cones (100 Hits – Silver), finish Karaoke (Karaoke Racer – Silver) and score 5,000 Survival points (Survive – Bronze).

● Big city, but small requirements for its first batch of awards.



● You deserve Trophies simply for suffering *Eat Lead*.



16-18 HOURS

EAT LEAD, LEGENDS OF WRESTLEMANIA, CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS

Platinum: 0 Gold: 0 Silver: 11 Bronze: 10

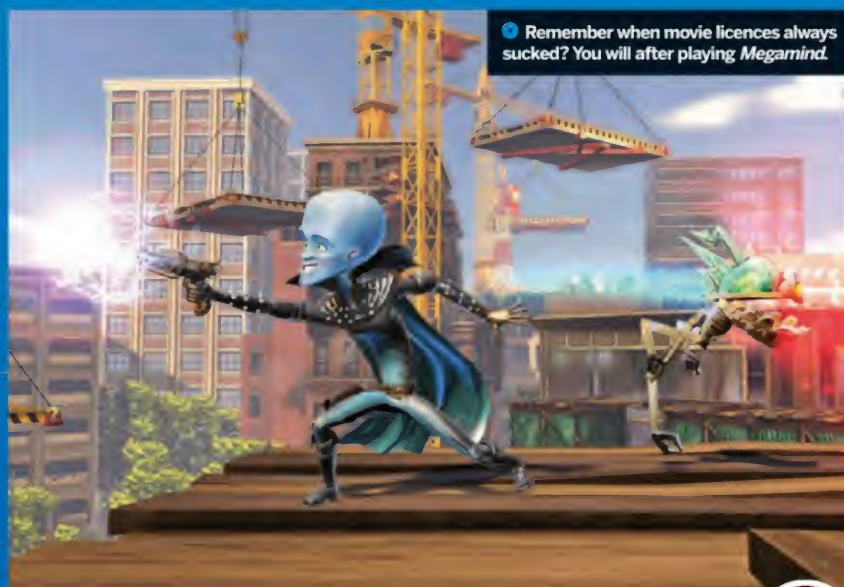
Now for some real dross. **Eat Lead's** sole redeeming feature is how often it dishes out Trophies. Put the game on the easiest difficulty. During the tutorial, beat five enemies in a row using solely melee attacks (Hands-On Approach and Feeling Punchy – Bronze and Silver). Go on to complete the tutorial (Straight-A Student – Bronze) and then pause the game (Take 5 – Bronze). Then on the first level, draw an enemy near a fire extinguisher and also stand nearby before shooting it (No Pain, No Gain – Bronze) and complete the level without dying (Just A Flesh Wound – Silver).

Move straight onto **Legends Of WrestleMania**. Win matches using five or more reversals (Technician – Silver), only using grapple attacks (Grapplemania – Silver) and performing a dive attack from all four corners (Dive Attack – Silver). Then create a legend (Created A Legend – Bronze) and use him to beat ten opponents in Legend Killer mode (New

Legend – Silver). Finally, win using a manager in Exhibition mode (Manager – Bronze). Easy enough.

Finally, **Cloudy With A Chance Of Meatballs** spits out a lot of easy Trophies. Completing it yields three Bronze Trophies, three Silver and a Gold and shouldn't take more than a few hours. There are a few easy, weird ones to grab. Use the spaghetti rope in Italian Street Fair 30 times (Pasta Power – Silver), climb up and down the bread 50 times in Restaurant Row (Bread Head – Silver) and reassign your pad to the second player and join in the game to unlock the co-op Trophy (Party Of Two – Bronze).





19-21 HOURS

TOTAL TROPHIES
125

MEGAMIND

Platinum: 1 Gold: 7 Silver: 8 Bronze: 10



Another final Trophy burst comes courtesy of **Megamind**, which takes even less time to Platinum than *Terminator Salvation* and is arguably even easier, the only difference being this has a few Trophies you can miss, unlike *Terminator's* complete-it-and-get-everything quirk. Again, you can walk away with a Platinum Trophy in three hours and level select means the few missable Trophies in here are easy enough to revisit once you're done.

One set of Trophies asks that you complete a level without dying – do it on the first level – and also that you beat the bosses without dying; the bosses are found on levels 3, 6, 9 and 10. If you die, keep going and complete the game anyway, as you can return to the bosses using level

select in your hideout. However, as none of them are particularly difficult, you shouldn't have any real problem tackling them. For final boss Blue Tighen, just focus on shooting the debris he throws at you and the column he tries to hit you with.

That leaves the collection of B.I.N.K.E.Y., which are the glowing objects you find dotted around each level from beating enemies and smashing objects, the hardest Trophy demanding you collect 3,000 of them in a single level. This isn't even a concern, as you should have the requisite amount done during level 2. Don't worry about this Trophy and just play through normally, as it would actually be something requiring you to go out of your way *not* to unlock by the time you complete *Megamind*.



22-24 HOURS

.DETUNED, LINGER IN SHADOWS

Platinum: 0 Gold: 1 Silver: 10 Bronze: 15



With your mental state now crumbling following a non-stop assault of games and Trophy pings, let's finish you off with two games that make no sense. First up is PSN title **.deTuned**. To get all the Trophies available, read the help screen, watch demo mode until the end, rotate the left analogue stick, rotate the right analogue stick, hold down **R2** to maximise an effect, press **X** and **○** then watch Rob dancing on the building off to the right, go through all the listed button combos, enter Carnival mode and rotate the right stick so all the elephants dance around the chair. The only tricky Trophy is that you have to play custom music – rip some to your PS3's hard drive first. Do all that and you'll walk away to the tune of four Bronze Trophies, five Silver and one Gold.



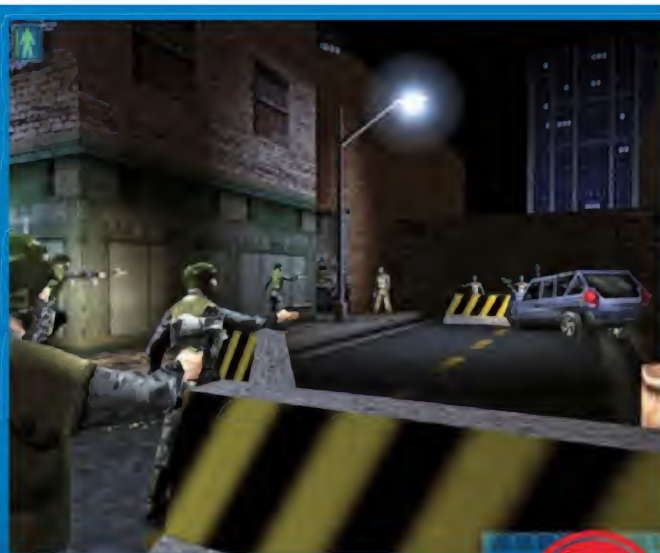
Finally there's **Linger In Shadows**, another tech demo doing its best game impression. Start by pressing **X**, then pause and shake the Sixaxis (Sigil Of Time – Bronze). Now follow these instructions. Pause and hold **L2** until the bar is full at 2:11. Pause and rotate the Sixaxis to fill the bar at 3:06. Pause and press **○** at 4:48 when the cat appears. Make the monster's eyes light up between 5:14 and 5:19, 5:24 and 5:32 and then shake the Sixaxis at 6:03. Now you have to get the puzzle pieces. Pause at 3:13 and look for the little poster with the hand, pause at 3:35 and look for the locust sign under the mannequin, pause at 4:21 and look to the left for the sign-like sigil, pause again at 5:04 and look at the paper by the cat, and finally look to the left of the monster at 5:41 and at the sunflower. All done!



BEST PS2 GAMES ON PSN STORE



Even if you can't use those discs any more, PSN offers a range of PS2 games for you to download. Here are some of the highlights...



DEUS EX

■ £7.99 ■ For FPS fans who like to think

Not as suited to the console format as the 2011 prequel, *Human Revolution*, the original *Deus Ex* is nevertheless a great piece of gaming history to get your brain-teeth into. Are brain-teeth a thing? Who knows? They are now. Anyway, it's a rather more cerebral take on the FPS genre, allowing players multiple approaches to every situation and, wonderfully, letting people pretty much do what they want within reason to tackle situations. Which basically involves throwing boxes at people a lot. Because throwing boxes is funny.

It's aged less than wonderfully and it suffers from the curse of being a turn-of-the-century FPS on console, meaning it's home to some annoying, loose controls. But look past it – because you have to – and there's still real substance here.

87%
PLAY
ISSUE 88



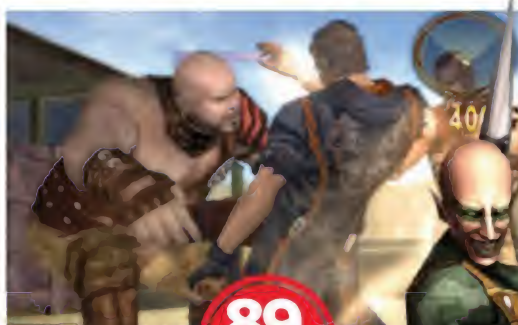
FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR

■ £7.99

■ For those about to join the military

Famously used as a military training tool, *Full Spectrum Warrior* was the commercial release of something made to make people better at killing foreigners. All right, so the home console version was pared down in the realism stakes, so it's not a total real-life war simulation like you might think. But that's a good thing, because it makes it a lot more fun than a demi-game caked in realism would be.

Tactical command of your squad as you make your way through the fictional streets of Zekistan is the name of the game. Actually, that's *Full Spectrum Warrior*. But you play the game like a tactical squad shooter and, would you believe it, it's actually good fun.



GOD HAND

■ £7.99

■ For fans of difficulty. And learning. And fighting

We feel like we're repeating ourselves again, but that's fine, because *God Hand* is a game worth repeating yourself over. Just like you'll be repeating the first level over and over to get to grips with it in the first place. Just like you'll be repeating the fight against the luchadore gorilla. Just like you'll be repeating the dick punches, if only to hear the 'DING!' sound that accompanies them. Just like you'll be repeating what we say here, because *God Hand* is that good.

Essentially a third-person fighter, *God Hand*'s magic comes in its customisable, open combat. It takes a while to master it, but once you're on top of everything, it's bliss.

89%
PLAY
ISSUE 149



GUNGRAVE OVERDOSE

■ £3.99

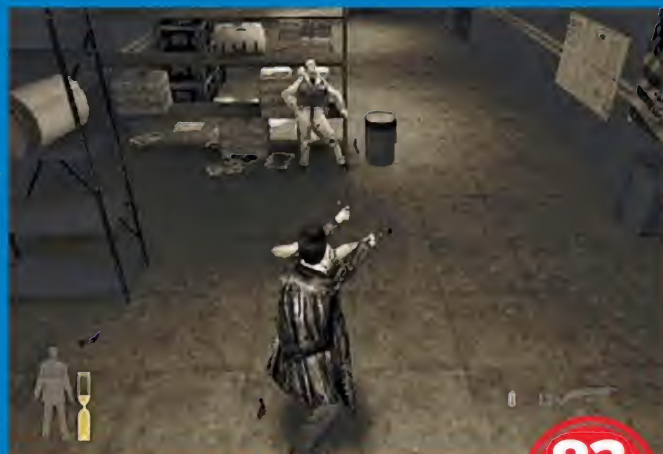
■ For people with £4

It's a divisive entry, no doubt, but *Gungrave Overdose* is one we simply had to feature here for two very good reasons: one, it's a genuine surprise to see it on PSN, and two, it's only four quid. For that kind of price it really doesn't matter if the game was on the receiving end of a mixed reception in **Play** on its release and that it feels a bit off compared to modern stylish third-person action games – which, translated, means 'it's not as good as *Bayonetta*'. But then, nothing is.

There's an audience for this one, for sure, and it's one of those you won't know if you like until you try it. So the low barrier to entry, price-wise, is a minor masterstroke on the part of System 3.



70%
PLAY
ISSUE 130



MAX PAYNE

■ £7.99

■ For anyone wanting to compare MP3 with its forebears

If only to vindicate the score we awarded Max's most recent noir romp, you should go back to the original to find out just what the hell we found so wrong about the 2012 iteration. So it feels loose as all hell, thanks to its early-days PS2 heritage, and it looks like... Well, it looks not as bad as our memories expected. But it certainly doesn't look great.

But when that bullet time hits – when you dive face-first through that doorway and redecorate the walls of your current warehouse of combat a nice shade of Brainsplatter Red, when you crunch down more painkillers, when you stare at Max's constipated visage, when you realise you're having more fun with an 11-year-old game than you do with the rather unfair shiny new version – that's when you realise it's worth dropping eight quid on this.

83%
PLAY
ISSUE 87



MAXIMO/MAXIMO VS ARMY OF ZIN

■ £7.99 each

■ For those who like to choose between one or the other

A spiritual follow-up to the world of *Ghosts 'N Goblins* and the actual follow-up to the spiritual follow-up, these are two games we found it difficult to separate. But for good reasons, as they're both still fun to play – as long as you can put up with some rather brutal difficulty and what might now seem like archaic design decisions.

But if you put on your strongest pants – it's a reference; we're not just being crass – and prepare yourself for some rather overlooked PS2 hacking and slashing then there's a lot to enjoy with these two. Which would we recommend if you can only get one? We'd go with *Army Of Zin* since it's that bit more refined. So there.

85%
PLAY
ISSUE 87

85%
PLAY
ISSUE 112



RED FACTION

■ £7.99

■ For anyone wanting to get their ass to Mars

Believe it or not, there was a time when FPS games on PS2 were done quite badly indeed. There was a time when consoles weren't the go-to format for the biggest examples of the first-person shooter genre. Then *Red Faction* arrived and all – well, some – of that changed.

Nowadays it's little more than a fun distraction with some elements that we still feel are missing from modern games – namely the Geo-Mod destruction engine. There are good times to be had if you're not demanding *Call Of Duty* levels of set-piece-infused action too. But, then, if you were demanding that then you're probably a bit of a fool anyway, so your opinion isn't that relevant. Sorry.

94%
PLAY
ISSUE 78



VIRTUA FIGHTER 4: EVOLUTION

■ £7.99 ■ For Ryan King, mainly

Sure, the shinier *Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown* may be strutting its stuff on PSN now, but that doesn't mean number four isn't still absolutely brilliant. It's the polished, perfected version of *Virtua Fighter 4* – just like *Final Showdown* is to *VF5*, actually. It's almost as if Sega likes to do this sort of thing with its *Virtua Fighter* series...

Anyway, if you're not up for the more modern take on *VF*, you can't go far wrong with *Evolution*. But just take into account that it would be like purchasing *Tekken 5* over *Tekken 6*, or *FIFA 11* over *FIFA 12*. Basically, it's the sort of decision you're going to make if you know the ins and outs of what you're doing. Or if you're being deliberately contrary and hate online play.

94%
PLAY
ISSUE 87

TOP TEN PSN RETRO



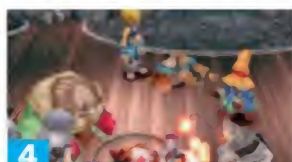
1 Metal Gear Solid



2 Resident Evil 2



3 God Hand



4 Final Fantasy IX



5 Streets Of Rage 2



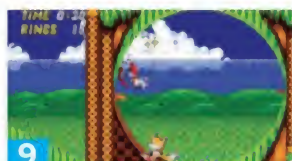
6 The Secret Of Monkey Island



7 Driver



8 Final Fight: Double Impact



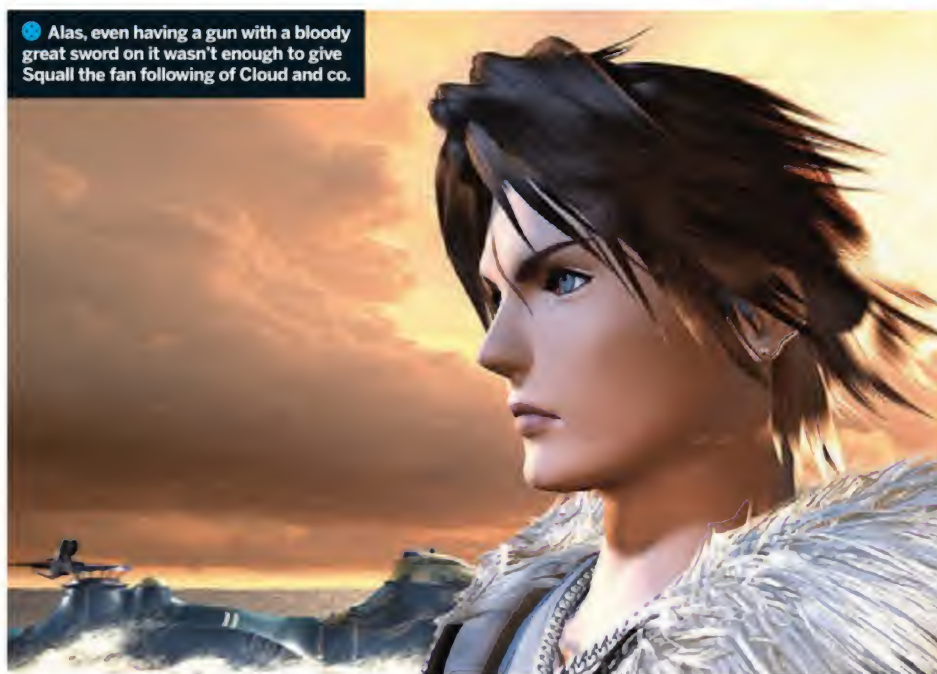
9 Sonic The Hedgehog 2



10 Crash Bandicoot

RETRO ON PSN... They're old but are they any good?

Alas, even having a gun with a bloody great sword on it wasn't enough to give Squall the fan following of Cloud and co.



Final Fantasy VIII



PlayStation

• Release date February 1999 • Publisher Square • Developer In-house
• Games it influenced None – Final Fantasy VII was more influential

IT WAS THE best of *Final Fantasy*; it was the worst of *Final Fantasy*. No one can come to a general consensus on *Final Fantasy VIII*. Time is usually the greatest judge in deciding these matters – look how it has nudged *Metal Gear Solid 2* from 'mildly disappointing' to 'failure' – but 13 years after release, *Final Fantasy VIII* has defied either category. No game has sat on the fence as long as Square's RPG.

On the plus side, *Final Fantasy VIII* was a visual feast. Realism dominated over fantasy but everything had its own theme, so it didn't lack variety. Fisherman's Horizon was rickety steampunk, Shumi Village was a biodome to explore and Lunatic Pandora was... well, lunatic sci-fi. Even the opening was stunning, as the static background seamlessly transitioned to CGI, swooshing around while you retained full control of Squall. *Final Fantasy VII* looked like a happy accident in a Lego factory. *Final Fantasy VIII* looked lush.

It was also a dream for RPG fans. You had to match your spells to stats to improve them, with different spells, plus the number stored, changing your attributes. This encouraged a mix-and-match system where you'd constantly tinker and experiment. Also tickling the RPG gland was the sheer number of secrets. The Cactuar Guardian Force, Mr Monkey side quest, the Tonberry King...

It also has the best soundtrack of any *Final Fantasy* game. This isn't an opinion up for debate. It's stone cold fact.

On the down side, it's incredible that *Final Fantasy VIII* managed to sail through

production without someone, somewhere, questioning whether the Draw system was a good idea. Or perhaps they did question it and were told to shut up and go back to colouring in the mud outside Balamb Garden. Either way, endlessly drawing spells from low-level monsters simply to boost your stats was a loathsome mechanic.

Also, the story starts off as a group of teenagers qualifying from a military school of sorts, then veers into insanity that encompasses possession, time travel, dinosaurs and space. Sounds brilliant, but not when you have no idea what's going on.

So what to make of *Final Fantasy VIII*? Like we said at the start, it's the best of *Final*



Fantasy and it's the worst of *Final Fantasy*. But despite its problems, there's a special charm to *Final Fantasy VIII*. It's the gorgeous environments, the evocative soundtrack, the rewards for poking around the dark corners of the world map, and the lack of annoying voiceover puncturing the mood. Yet being so tethered to a central mechanic, in this case the Draw system, means the failure of that nearly brings the entire game down.

So what do we make of *Final Fantasy VIII* now? Hmm. We'll come back to this in another 13 years...

WHAT WE SAID: Issue 54 • 96%
"One mother of a *Fantasy* game!"



Unlike *Final Fantasy VII*, *VIII*'s graphics impressed both inside and outside the CG cut-scenes.

NEVER COMING TO PSN #7

Suzuki Bakuhatu

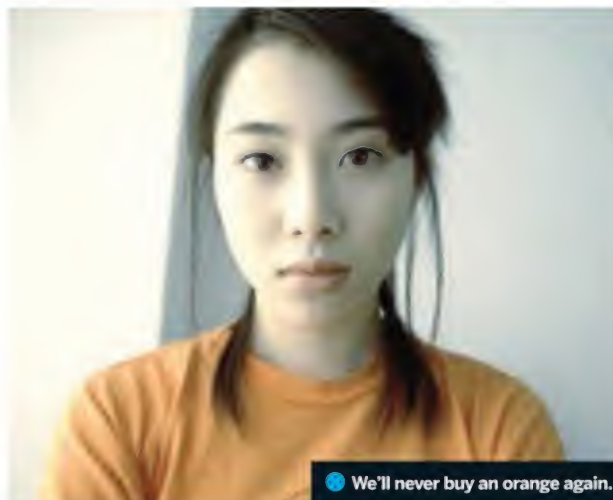


- Release date 1995
- Developer SOL

SUZUKI BAKAHATSU IS a bomb-defusing game. Nothing inherently weird about that – if we can have games where we play helicopter gunners strafing the homes of foreign nationals, then we can save lives, surely?

Ah, but this is a bomb-defusing game from Japan, which means it probably is indeed inherently weird and utterly baffling. And, true to form, it is.

Because the bombs that you'll be defusing aren't your usual roadside IEDs or shopping mall nail bombs. Nah, that's too conventional. They're oranges. Or the moon. And there's a bucketload of real actors in there, looking surprised when they find out that one of their five a day is going to explode their faces off.



• We'll never buy an orange again.

We've got to say, we desperately want to play this. Not because we think it's going to be brilliant and all that, but because we want to defuse the moon. And in a world of one-note shooters and churned-out DLC, that sounds like something we can all get behind.

WE COULD HAVE DONE WITHOUT

Miami Vice



REMEMBER GTA: VICE City? That's the real *Miami Vice* game. What did the series' fans do to deserve this? We're very, very sorry.

It has a roll animation that looks like someone falling over. The Jan Hammer theme plays in every cutscene regardless of context. Crockett endlessly mutters his "I need a little help, Tubbs!" line when low on health, even in levels that begin with Tubbs being sent all the way to the other side of Miami.

Almost everything about it is bad. Not a huge surprise, seeing as it was developed by the masters at Davilex, the guys behind the equally dreadful *Knight Rider* game. We say 'almost' because the ending is superb.

After chasing the main bad guy for the duration of the game, players finally corner him on a helipad where the final shootout takes place. Carefully chipping away, his health eventually falls to zero... so he then gets in a helicopter and flies away while the duo look on in silence. Then the credits roll. That's it. Genius!



• Form an orderly queue, ladies.



PS2 CLASSICS REVIEW - SHINOBI



The hardest game ever?

IT'S PAINFUL, REALLY. How we remember we're not good enough for *Shinobi* within 0.8 seconds of loading it up. Memories of pads with bite marks, standing up to swear at the TV and waking up behind the sofa having passed out with rage. *Shinobi* was difficult enough when we were 15-year-olds with robotic reaction times honed by too many evenings spent with games rather than French GCSE revision. Playing it now? After all these years of sofa slouching and Rustlers burgers? Fat chance. In both senses.

It was only one mechanic that made it hard. The design was so rigidly old-school that it felt archaic and retro even when it was fresh out of its shrink-wrap. Enemies with patterns, instant death pits, huge bosses and so on. All that was manageable, except for that one mechanic where your health would endlessly drain and only killing would top it up. So you were always in a hurry. Charging into attacks by mistake. Charging into death pits by mistake. Charging everywhere by mistake. If you think you're tough enough, go for it. Us? We'll stick to Rustlers, ta.

RETRO GAMES WE SAID WE WANT TO PLAY AGAIN BUT PROBABLY WON'T



Time Crisis 2

When this was originally launched we got so excited that our brain-pipes filled with pus and we almost died. True story. Now, however, it's not that exciting. Which is a shame. Sniff.



Deus Ex: The Conspiracy

Yeah, so it's The Greatest Game Ever and all that. So what? Have you seen the size of the fonts on this thing these days? Opening a door is like getting shouted at by a drill sergeant with a megaphone for a head.



Kill Switch

It's the game that was *Gears Of War* – and hence every other shooter from then on – before *Gears Of War* was *Gears Of War*. Still, it's short, and now it looks a load of old bobbins, so we'll leave it to its rightful place in history. Well done, *Kill Switch*. Well done.



Return To Castle Wolfenstein

Occasionally **Play** likes to look back over the archives and see what games we gave high scores to. Some hold up, while others are obviously the work of early onset dementia. This is the latter. The thought of playing this again makes us sad.

PLAY# PlayList

If you want to know what a game scored then these pages are for you

TEAM PICKS TOP FIVE GAMES TO PLAY WHEN YOU'RE ILL



top five RYAN KING

- 1 DC Universe Online
- 2 Fallout: New Vegas
- 3 The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim
- 4 Batman: Arkham City
- 5 All the Lego games



top five IAN DRANSFIELD

- 1 Joe Danger
- 2 The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim
- 3 Saints Row: The Third
- 4 Tekken 2
- 5 Kingdoms Of Amalur



top five STEVE BURNS

- 1 Manhunt
- 2 Dr Mario
- 3 Civilization Revolution
- 4 Grand Theft Auto IV
- 5 PES



top five ANDY SALTER

- 1 The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim
- 2 Fallout 3
- 3 Fallout: New Vegas
- 4 The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion
- 5 Worms 2

PS3 LISTING



game	issue	score
3D Collection	195	75%
3D Dot Game Heroes	192	87%
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	70%
Ace Combat: Assault Horizon	211	78%
Afro Samurai	177	61%
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	78%
Agarest: Generations Of War Zero	209	52%
Air Conflicts: Secret Wars	208	58%
Alice: Madness Returns	207	57%
Aliens Vs Predator	189	79%
Alone In The Dark	173	70%
Alpha Protocol	193	83%
Ape Escape	208	55%
Arcana Heart 3	207	79%
Armored Core For Answer	173	65%
Armored Core 4	153	67%
Armored Core V	217	60%
Army Of Two	164	80%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	65%
Ar Tonelico Qoga: Knell Of Ar Ciel	203	27%
Ashes Cricket 2009	183	30%
Assassin's Creed	161	58%
Assassin's Creed II	186	89%
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	199	91%
More than enough additions to take the Assassin's Creed formula into modern classic territory.		
Assassin's Creed Revelations	212	75%
Asura's Wrath	216	67%
Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland	198	77%
Backbreaker	193	70%
Band Hero	187	68%
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	85%
Batman: Arkham City	211	94%
Rocksteady's sequel to the excellent Arkham Asylum is a serious contender for game of the year.		
Battle Fantasia	176	67%
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	78%
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	93%
Single-player is fairly impressive but take it online and it's bordering on genius. This is quite possibly the best shooter on PS3 today.		
Battlefield 3	212	88%
Battleship	219	44%
Bayonetta*	187	93%
Beijing 2008	168	54%
Beowulf	161	61%
Binary Domain	216	70%
Bionic Commando	179	82%
BioShock	172	93%
BioShock 2	189	88%
Birds Of Steel	217	55%
BlackSite	163	43%
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	58%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	85%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	198	94%
Blazing Angels	151	54%
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	209	63%
Blitz: The League II	172	67%
Blur	193	86%
Bodycount	210	54%
Borderlands	185	80%
Brink	206	67%
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	75%
Brütal Legend	185	79%
Bulletstorm	203	86%
Burnout Paradise	162	74%
Buzz!: Quiz TV	168	82%
Buzz!: Quiz World	185	70%

game	issue	score
Call Of Duty 3	151	77%
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	68%
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	88%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	186	94%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	212	88%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	199	94%
Treyarch's first genuinely brilliant entry to the series and a standard-bearer for fast-paced online shooters.		
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	85%
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	208	30%
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	70%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	197	85%
Carnival Island	213	53%
Cars 2	208	68%
Catherine	215	61%
Champion Jockey	210	50%
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	178	87%
Child Of Eden	211	80%
Civilization Revolution	168	90%
Clash Of The Titans	193	65%
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	84%
Colin McRae: DiRT	158	91%
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	184	87%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	65%
Conan	160	71%
Condemned 2	165	78%
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	50%
Crash Time 4: The Syndicate	218	37%
Create	199	71%
Cross Edge	182	59%
Crysis 2	204	72%
Damnation	181	38%
Dance Dance Revolution	201	52%
Dante's Inferno	189	80%
Dark Sector	165	62%
Dark Souls	211	90%
Sequel to one of the hardest games in recent times. Dark Souls is another superb release from developer From Software.		
Dark Void	188	81%
Darksiders	188	83%
DC Universe Online	202	80%
de Blob 2	203	65%
Dead Island	210	79%
Dead Rising 2	197	78%
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record	211	61%
Dead Space	172	87%
Dead Space 2	201	92%
The point where the Dead Space series stepped up and became something to be genuinely excited about.		
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	68%
Def Jam: Icon	151	79%
Def Jam Rapstar	199	72%
Demon's Souls	193	92%
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	178	29%
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	209	91%
Worries: unfounded. Fun: lots of it. True Deus Ex experience: confirmed. Boss battles: bloody awful.		
Devil May Cry 4	163	89%
Devil May Cry HD Collection	217	80%
DiRT 3	206	85%
DiRT Showdown	219	84%
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	81%
DJ Hero	186	91%
DJ Hero 2	198	88%
Dragon Age: Origins	186	82%
Dragon Age II	203	86%
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	40%
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	61%
Dragon's Dogma	218	48%
Driver: San Francisco	209	68%
Duke Nukem Forever	207	33%
Dungeon Siege III	206	80%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam	160	40%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 2	176	43%

game	issue	score
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	208	56%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	189	37%
Dynasty Warriors 6	164	30%
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	44%
Dynasty Warriors 7	204	32%
EA Sports Active 2	200	81%
EA Sports Grand Slam Tennis	215	75%
EA Sports MMA	198	89%
Eat Lead	178	38%
EDF: Insect Armageddon	208	64%
El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	77%
Enchanted Arms	152	69%
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	168	60%
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	197	83%
Eternal Sonata	176	87%
Everybody's Golf 5*	158	88%
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	91%
Eye Of Judgment	159	65%
EyePet	185	83%
EyePet: Move	197	84%
F1 2010	197	86%
F1 2011	211	71%
FaceBreaker	170	55%
Fairytale Fights	186	51%
Fallout 3	173	97%
Fallout 3 lives up to its promise and then some. It's a damning portrayal of the consequences of war, and a compelling RPG experience.		
Fallout: New Vegas	198	88%
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	39%
Far Cry 2	172	74%
F.E.A.R.	151	81%
F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin	176	87%
F.E.A.R. 3	208	60%
FIFA 08	159	84%
FIFA 09	171	87%
FIFA 10	184	90%
FIFA 11	197	91%
FIFA 12	210	86%
FIFA Street (2012)	217	74%
FIFA Street 3	163	66%
FIFA World Cup 2010	192	70%
Fight Night Champion	203	88%
Fight Night Round 3	151	87%
Fight Night Round 4	181	84%
Final Fantasy XIII	190	85%
Final Fantasy XIII-2	214	80%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	51%
Folklore	158	66%
Formula One Championship Edition	151	72%
Fracture	171	72%
Front Mission Evolved	198	52%
Fuel	180	49%
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	151	69%
G-Force	183	59%
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	38%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	83%
Ghost Recon Future Soldier	219	60%
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	80%
GI Joe	183	22%
God Of War Collection*	188	93%
Two of the greatest PS2 action games of all time come together at a bargain price. Essential purchase.		
God Of War Collection: Volume II	210	70%
God Of War III	190	88%
GoldenEye 007: Reloaded	213	63%
Gran Turismo 5	200	85%
Gran Turismo 5 Prologue	165	75%
Grand Theft Auto IV	166	98%
Green Day: Rock Band	194	77%
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	94%
Guitar Hero III	160	90%
Guitar Hero III is another great rhythm-action beast, sure to delight fans and newcomers alike. So, grab a guitar and rock out!		
Guitar Hero 5	184	81%
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	168	63%

This month's new entries

The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

Spec Ops: The Line **PS3**
Game Of Thrones **PS3**
SBK Generations **PS3**
Rune Factory Oceans **PS3**
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode II **PSN**
Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown **PSN**

59% PixelJunk 4am **PSN** 40%
39% Inversion **PS3** 49%
51% Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock **PS3** 32%
51% Mad Riders **PSN** 70%
40% Batman: Arkham City: Harley Quinn's Revenge **PSN** 55%
90% Wonder Boy In Monster Land **PSN** 50%

game	issue	score
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	76%
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	88%
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	65%
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	71%
Guitar Hero World Tour	173	95%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 1	200	21%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 2	208	37%
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	60%
Harry Potter: The Order Of The Phoenix	155	32%
Haze	167	64%
Heavenly Sword	157	71%
Heavy Rain	189	94%
Heavy Rain: Move Edition	198	70%
Heroes Over Europe	184	48%
Homefront	203	69%
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	207	59%
Hyperdimension Neptunia	202	21%
Ice Age 3: Dawn Of The Dinosaurs	182	47%
Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus Classics HD	210	94%
Largely ignored when they were first released, gamers can now enjoy these wonderful games in brilliant HD.		
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	183	72%
inFamous	180	81%
inFamous 2	207	83%
International Cricket 2010	194	61%
Iron Man	166	58%
Iron Man 2	193	50%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	199	63%
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	64%
JASF: Jane's Advanced Strike Fighters	217	30%
John Daly's ProStroke Golf	197	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	78%
Just Cause 2	190	87%
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	73%
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	71%
Katamari Forever	184	88%
Killzone 2	176	93%
Killzone 3	202	80%
Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning	215	70%
Knights Contract	202	53%
Kung Fu Panda 2	207	20%
Kung Fu Rider	196	65%
Lair	158	52%
L.A. Noire	206	91%
Not perfect but Rockstar's new IP introduces pioneering facial-capture technology and interesting gameplay.		
Last Rebellion	191	42%
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	54%
Legendary	173	62%
Lego Batman	173	65%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	194	79%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7	213	67%
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	73%
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	71%
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	206	76%
Lego Rock Band	187	75%
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	76%
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	204	79%
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	24%
LittleBigPlanet	172	94%
LittleBigPlanet 2	201	96%
An amazing game and something to get involved with even if you can't create your own stuff.		
Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	60%
Lost Planet 2	192	75%
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	69%
Lost: The Video Game	164	38%
LOTR: Conquest	175	52%
Madden NFL 07	151	82%
Madden NFL 08	157	82%
Madden NFL 09	170	83%
Madden NFL 10	184	82%
Madden NFL 11	196	84%

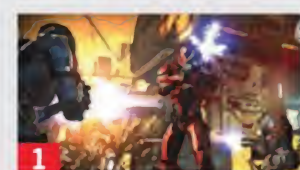
game	issue	score
Madden NFL 12	209	85%
Mafia II	196	81%
MAG	189	68%
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	72%
Marvel Vs Capcom 3	202	88%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	64%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	57%
Max Payne 3	219	77%
Mass Effect 2	201	97%
Mass Effect 3	216	93%
Despite having arguably one of the worst endings in videogame history, this is still a must for any serious videogame collection.		
Medal Of Honor	198	86%
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	85%
Medieval Moves	213	47%
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	78%
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	92%
Not the final Metal Gear Solid game after all then. Still brilliant though, and still largely incomprehensible.		
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	214	91%
Mobile Suit Gundam: Crossfire	151	37%
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	58%
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	84%
Mindjack	202	38%
Mini Ninjas	184	80%
Mirror's Edge	173	71%
ModNation Racers	192	90%
The best kart racer by far on the PlayStation 3, but combined with incredible levels of creativity. If you love LBP you'll love this, too.		
Monster Madness	170	78%
Mortal Kombat	205	81%
Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe	173	68%
MotoGP 08	172	65%
MotoGP 09/10	190	77%
Moto GP 10/11	204	64%
MotorStorm	151	92%
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	203	76%
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	172	93%
Mud: FIM Motocross Championship	217	50%
MX Vs ATV: Alive	206	42%
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	68%
MX Vs ATV Untamed	164	58%
nail'd	201	61%
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	59%
Naruto Shippuden: Ultimate Ninja Storm Generations	217	53%
NASCAR 08	157	38%
Naughty Bear	195	64%
NBA 07	153	33%
NBA 2K7	151	76%
NBA 2K8	172	71%
NBA 2K10	186	79%
NBA 2K11	199	82%
NBA 2K12	211	88%
NBA Jam	200	68%
NBA Live 08	158	59%
NBA Live 09	170	81%
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	68%
Need For Speed Carbon	151	76%
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	199	91%
Hot Pursuit is one of the best arcade racers of all time - pure, unadulterated bliss in game form.		
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	86%
Need For Speed Shift	184	81%
Need For Speed: The Run	213	63%
Need For Speed Undercover	173	75%
NeverDead	215	39%
Nier	192	54%
NHL 2K7	151	80%
NHL 2K9	172	67%
NHL 2K10	186	70%
NHL 09	170	88%
NHL 10	184	85%
NHL 11	198	89%
NHL 12	210	78%

game	issue	score
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	88%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	82%
Ninja Gaiden 3	217	63%
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	89%
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	78%
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	205	75%
Overlord: Raising Hell	167	65%
Overlord II	181	68%
Pain	183	69%
PES 2008	159	70%
PES 2009	172	80%
PES 2010	185	72%
PES 2011	197	73%
PES 2012	210	74%
Phineas & Ferb: Across The 2nd Dimension	211	66%
PixelJunk Racers	160	74%
PlayStation Move Heroes	204	54%
POTC: At World's End	154	48%
Portal 2	205	95%
Another exceptional realisation from Valve, gamers are going to be talking about Portal 2 for a long time to come.		
Prince Of Persia	174	83%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	68%
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	200	88%
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	40%
Prototype	181	76%
Prototype 2	219	75%
Puma After Hours Athletes	214	58%
Pure	171	80%
Pure Football	194	69%
Quantum Of Solace	175	57%
Quantum Theory	197	29%
Race Driver: GRID	167	85%
Racket Sports	198	37%
Rage	211	60%
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	88%
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	78%
Rango	203	54%
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	82%
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	211	68%
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	72%
Rayman Origins	212	80%
Red Dead Redemption	193	92%
Relocates the familiar GTA formula to a superbly realised new setting and, in many ways, is unlike anything else as a result.		
Red Dead Redemption: Undead Nightmare	199	87%
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	62%
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	80%
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City	217	33%
Resident Evil 5	177	86%
Resident Evil 5: Gold Edition	190	86%
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	83%
Resistance 2	173	90%
With its impressive set pieces and glorious multiplayer mode, Resistance 2 is one of the best FPSs on the PS3.		
Resistance 3	210	88%
Resonance Of Fate	191	79%
Ridge Racer 7	151	75%
Ridge Racer Unbounded	217	67%
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	58%
Rock Band	169	94%
Rock Band 2	179	96%
With the incredible tracklist, tweaked engine, and new modes, this is easily the best rhythm-action game currently available.		
Rock Band 3	199	84%
Rogue Warrior	188	09%
Rugby World Cup 2011	209	49%
R.U.S.E.	197	82%
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	76%
Saints Row 2	172	79%
Saints Row: The Third	211	88%
Saint Seiya: Sanctuary Battle	216	52%
Saw	186	52%
Saw II: Flesh & Blood	198	36%

*denotes import review

TOP TEN GAMES YOU SHOULD PLAY ONLINE MORE

(instead of just sticking with COD/BF3)



1 Mass Effect 3



2 Starhawk



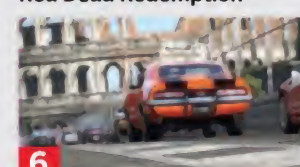
3 Assassin's Creed Revelations



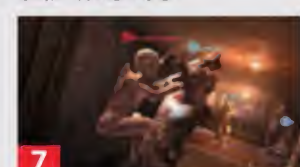
4 Portal 2



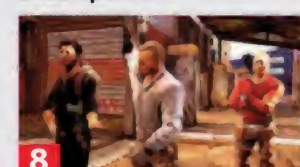
5 Marvel Pinball



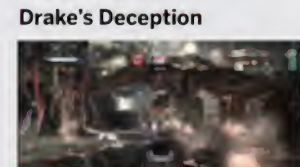
6 Red Dead Redemption



7 Gran Turismo 5



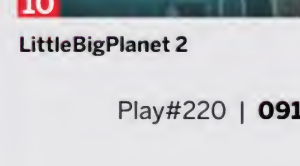
8 Dead Space 2



9 Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception



10 Transformers: War For Cybertron



LittleBigPlanet 2

PS3 TOP FIVES



FPS

- 1 Battlefield 3
- 1 Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3
- 3 Portal 2
- 4 Resistance 3
- 5 Deus Ex: Human Revolution



RACING

- 1 WipEout 2048
- 2 Gran Turismo 5
- 3 DiRT Showdown
- 4 Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit
- 5 MotorStorm RC



PS VITA

- 1 WipEout 2048
- 2 Everybody's Golf
- 3 Gravity Rush
- 4 FIFA Football
- 5 Uncharted: Golden Abyss



ADVENTURE

- 1 The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim
- 2 Mass Effect 3
- 3 Dark Souls
- 4 Saints Row: The Third
- 5 Starhawk



FIGHTING

- 1 Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike
- 2 BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend
- 3 Skullgirls
- 4 Street Fighter X Tekken
- 5 SoulCalibur V

game issue score

Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	85%
SBK 08	172	55%
SBK 2011	206	70%
SBK X: Superbike World Championship	193	67%
Sega Rally	158	92%



Simply the best rally game on the PS3. Unless simulation is your bag then you'll want to go for Colin McRae. Not much in it, really.

Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	198	76%
Shadows Of The Damned	207	79%
Shaun White Skateboarding	198	70%
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	72%
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	177	32%
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	66%
Silent Hill: Downpour	217	81%
Silent Hill HD Collection	217	76%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	64%
Simpsons Game	160	82%
SingStar	159	80%
SingStar Guitar	199	70%
SingStar Pop Edition	179	81%
Singularity	195	80%
Skate	159	86%
Skate 2	175	82%
Skate 3	192	86%
Sniper Elite V2	218	52%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	45%
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	63%
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	78%
Sonic Generations	212	70%
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	52%
Sonic Unleashed	175	48%
Sorcery	219	76%
SoulCalibur IV	169	94%
SoulCalibur V	214	80%
Spider-Man 3	155	33%
Spider-Man: Edge Of Time	212	38%
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	197	69%
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	55%
Splatterhouse	200	58%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	79%
Split/Second: Velocity	192	90%



Just beating *Blur* to the chequered flag, *Split/Second* is a wonderfully intense racing game in the *Burnout* mould.

Sports Champions	196	83%
SSX	216	45%
Starhawk	219	81%
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	63%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	65%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	61%
Start The Party!	196	72%
Stormrise	178	51%
Stranglehold	159	65%
Street Fighter IV	176	95%
Street Fighter X Tekken	217	83%
Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition	207	88%
Stuntman: Ignition	157	82%
SuperCar Challenge	183	66%
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	55%
Superstars V8 Racing	181	63%
Super Street Fighter IV	191	90%



The fact that you're buying a lot of stuff you've probably bought already is the only drawback to what is the best fighter ever made.

Supremacy MMA	211	40%
Syndicate	216	78%
Tekken 6	184	94%



There are flaws that hurt the experience, but nothing, *nothing*, stops *Tekken 6* from being an intense, tactical and brilliant fighting game.

Tekken Hybrid	213	79%
Test Drive Unlimited 2	203	62%
The Adventures Of Tintin	212	58%
The Beatles: Rock Band	184	96%
The Bourne Conspiracy	168	72%
The Club	163	80%
The Cursed Crusade	211	40%
The Darkness	154	91%
The Darkness II	215	76%
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	91%
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	212	93%



WARNING: The latest addition to Bethesda's superb franchise will seriously damage your social life.

The Fight	199	42%
The Godfather	151	37%
The Godfather II	178	38%

game issue score

The Golden Compass	162	32%
The House Of The Dead: Overkill	212	75%
The Incredible Hulk	168	52%
The Jak And Daxter Trilogy	216	82%
The King Of Fighters XII	182	82%
The King Of Fighters XIII	213	76%
The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North	213	42%
The Orange Box	161	93%

The Saboteur	187	67%
The Shoot	199	76%
The Sims 3	199	87%
The Sims 3: Pets	212	70%
The Sly Collection	200	84%
Thor: God Of Thunder	206	38%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07	151	88%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08	158	73%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09	171	86%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10	181	69%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11	194	60%
Tiger Woods PGA 12: The Masters	204	65%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 13	217	70%
Time Crisis 4	166	69%
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	58%
TimeShift	162	72%
TNA Impact!	171	71%
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	80%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X.	177	75%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2	196	69%
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Classics Trilogy HD	210	78%
Tomb Raider Trilogy	204	86%
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	83%
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	85%
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	72%
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	52%
Top Gun: Hard Lock	218	45%
Top Spin 3	168	71%
Top Spin 4	203	60%
Tornado Outbreak	186	56%
Toy Story 3	195	82%
Transformers: Dark Of The Moon	208	64%
Transformers: Revenge Of The Fallen	182	41%
Transformers: The Game	156	34%
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	80%
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	202	56%
Trinity Universe	194	61%
Tron Evolution	200	17%
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	40%
Turok	163	46%
TV Superstars	199	53%
Twisted Metal	216	68%
Two Worlds II	203	64%
UEFA EURO 2008	165	62%
UFC Undisputed 2009	180	90%



Undisputed is gorgeous to look at, it's incredibly deep, and it's one of the most addictive fighters we've played in ages.

UFC Undisputed 2010	193	88%
UFC Undisputed 3	215	82%
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3	212	78%
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	87%
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	185	96%
Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception	212	90%



Fans of the series won't be disappointed as Drake returns with some exceptional set pieces and superb action.

Unreal Tournament III	162	88%
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	54%
Valkyria Chronicles	173	82%
Vancouver 2010	189	76%
Vanquish	197	93%



A brilliant surprise from the developer of *Bayonetta* and easily one of the best games we've played in 2010

Viking: Battle For Asgard	165	74%
Virtua Fighter 5	151	83%
Virtua Tennis 2009	180	80%
Virtua Tennis 3	150	91%
Virtua Tennis 4	205	79%
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	63%
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine	210	51%
Warhawk	157	84%
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	202	14%
Warriors Orochi 3	217	59%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	16%
Wet	184	41%
Wheelman	178	72%
Where The Wild Things Are	188	56%

game issue score

White Knight Chronicles	190	55%
White Knight Chronicles II	207	49%
Wolfenstein	183	72%
World Snooker Championship 2007	151	56%
WRC: FIA World Rally Championship	197	76%
WRC 2: FIA World Rally Championship	211	63%
WSC REAL 09: World Snooker Championship	177	67%
WSC Real 11	204	69%
WWE All Stars	204	82%
WWE Legends Of Wrestlemania	178	80%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2008	159	88%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2009	173	74%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2010	185	77%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2011	199	63%
WWE '12	212	50%
X-Blades	178	54%
X-Men Destiny	211	35%
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	71%
Yakuza: Dead Souls	216	60%
Yakuza 3	191	80%
Yakuza 4	203	79%
Yoostar 2: In The Movies	204	60%

PS VITA LISTING



A-Men	217	70%
Army Corps Of Hell	217	64%
Everybody's Golf	215	86%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend	216	85%
Escape Plan	216	81%
FIFA Football	216	80%
Gravity Rush	219	86%
Hustle Kings	216	81%
Little Deviants	215	69%
Lumines Electric Symphony	216	85%
ModNation Racers: Road Trip	215	59%
Mortal Kombat	219	83%
MotorStorm RC	217	81%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma Plus	217	72%
Rayman Origins	216	84%
Reality Fighters	215	52%
Resistance: Burning Skies	219	54%
Ridge Racer	216	48%
Super Stardust Delta	216	84%
Touch My Katamari	216	83%
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3	216	80%
Uncharted: Golden Abyss	215	83%
Unit 13	216	67%
Virtua Tennis 4: World Tour Edition	215	81%
WipEout 2048	215	87%

PS STORE LISTING











1942: Joint Strike	170	74%
3-On-3 NHL Arcade	177	62%
After Burner Climax	193	91%






Classic, frantic and utterly brilliant arcade action from Sega. A fine example of what the company is best known for.

Age Of Booty	172	81%
Alien Breed: Impact	196	80%
Alien Breed 2: Assault	201	82%
Alien Breed 3: Descend	204	61%
All Zombies Must Die!	214	64%
Amy	215	19%
Anarchy: Rush Hour	194	73%
Aqua Panic	193	68%
Arc The Lad	215	79%
Armageddon Riders	207	65%
Back To The Future: It's About Time	204	71%
Battlefield 1943	182	89%
Beat Hazard Ultra	213	79%
Beat Sketcher	201	85%
Beyond Good & Evil HD	207	86%
Bishi Bashi Special!	175	61%
Bionic Commando Rearmed	169	88%
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	61%
Blacklight: Tango Down	200	64%
Blade Kitten	197	72%
Blast Factor	152	72%
Blokus	202	54%
BloodRayne: Betrayal	211	62%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode I	188	65%

game	issue	score
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode II	188	61%
Blue Toad Murder Files Episodes 4/5/6	193	70%
Bombberman Ultra	185	82%
Braid	188	93%
 We had to wait quite a while, but time is what we have plenty of both with and for <i>Braid</i> . Simply brilliant.		
Burn Zombie Burn	178	85%
Burnout Crash	211	79%
Call Of Duty Classic	188	90%
Calling All Cars	155	81%
Castle Crashers	200	88%
Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair	212	67%
Catan	195	85%
Chime Super Deluxe	203	80%
Comet Crash	186	84%
Comix Zone	210	62%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	16	79%
Command & Conquer Red Alert: Retaliation	176	55%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	168	70%
Commander's Challenge	185	68%
Command & Conquer	175	44%
Cool Boarders	173	57%
Cool Boarders 2	175	31%
Costume Quest	199	70%
Crash Bandicoot	172	77%
Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped	174	82%
Crash Commando	174	80%
Crash Team Racing	170	79%
Crazy Machines Elements	210	71%
Crazy Taxi	200	80%
Crescent Pale Mist	200	70%
Critter Crunch	188	91%
 This is yet another beautiful, cute and high-class puzzler on the PSN that works perfectly and is a joy to play.		
Crystal Defenders	184	48%
Cubix HD	207	76%
Dark Mist	164	53%
Dead Nation	201	86%
Dead Space: Extraction	203	88%
Dead Space: Ignition	199	47%
DeathSpank	195	83%
Destruction Derby	01	80%
.detuned	186	50%
Deus Ex	219	83%
Digger HD	186	52%
Diner Dash	190	66%
Driver	171	90%
Droplitz	184	91%
Earthworm Jim HD	196	89%
Eat Them!	202	60%
echochrome II	202	83%
echochrome	169	85%
Elefunk	170	45%
Euforia	212	85%
Explodemon	203	70%
Fat Princess	183	65%
Fatal Inertia EX	168	65%
FIFA 09 Ultimate Team	178	61%
Final Fight: Double Impact	193	90%
 This scrolling-fighter classic from 1989 makes an almost faultless appearance on PSN. Stick it on your download list.		
Final Fantasy VII	181	96%
 Even after all these years it still holds up. In fact, our mark seems to have gone up 3% since 1997.		
Final Fantasy VIII	190	90%
Final Fantasy IX	195	90%
Flight Control HD	198	85%
Flock!	179	70%
fIOW	151	90%
 Another 90% game for the PS3, another lesson in simple, addictive gameplay. fIOW is an innovative title available on the Network.		
Flower	176	85%
Frogger Returns	190	35%
From Dust	211	82%
Funky Lab Rat	201	70%
G-Police	27	84%
Galaxy Fight	215	27%
Gatling Gears	207	62%
Geon	175	71%
Go! Puzzle	152	58%
God Hand	216	83%
Gotham City Impostors	216	78%

game	issue	score
Gran Turismo HD	150	75%
Gravity Crash	187	85%
Greed Corp	191	75%
Greg Hastings Paintball 2	219	22%
GTI Club+	174	72%
Gundemonium Collection	197	80%
Gunstar Heroes	181	85%
Hamsterball	194	72%
Hardcore 4x4	15	81%
Hasbro Family Game Night	187	60%
Heavy Weapon	187	75%
High Velocity Bowling	163	50%
Hi-Octane	178	64%
The House Of The Dead 4	218	82%
Hustle Kings	190	87%
Hyperbolloid HD	188	70%
I Am Alive	217	64%
Infamous: Festival Of Blood	212	76%
Inferno Pool	181	81%
International Track & Field	171	80%
Interpol: The Trail Of Doctor Chaos	185	48%
Invincible Tiger: The Legend Of Han Tao	185	70%
Jet Rider 2	176	71%
Joe Danger	194	96%
 Simply put, Joe Danger is one of the best games you'll currently find on the PSN. Buy it. Buy it now.		
Journey	216	87%
Judge Dredd	18	19%
Jumping Flash	172	55%
Jurassic Park: The Game	214	32%
Kick-Ass The Game	194	60%
Kula World	172	71%
Kung-Fu Live	201	42%
Landit Bandit	195	66%
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	198	90%
Lead & Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	193	65%
Lemmings	151	79%
Limbo	209	90%
Linger In Shadows	173	69%
LocoRoco Cocoreccho!	159	80%
Lumines Supernova	178	90%
Madden NFL Arcade	188	58%
Magic Carpet	179	65%
Magic: The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalkers	202	84%
Magic: The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalkers 2012	208	70%
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	182	90%
Matt Hazard: Blood Bath And Beyond	189	69%
Medal Of Honor: Frontline	210	52%
MediEvil	173	45%
Mega Man 9	172	75%
Mega Man 10	192	82%
Metal Gear Solid	187	93%
 While it looks rather rough now, the game itself remains a real high point in the franchise. Simply essential.		
Metal Gear Solid Online	175	45%
Microbot	202	51%
Monkey Island 2: Special Edition	195	94%
Motorhead	173	60%
Namco Museum Essentials	193	60%
Naruto Shippuden: Kizuna Drive	205	42%
NBA Jam: On Fire Edition	212	64%
Noby Noby Boy	177	85%
Nucleus	155	82%
Numblast	183	60%
N2O	37	70%
Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD	214	86%
Outland	207	72%
OutRun Online Arcade	180	80%
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	201	91%
 Bold, bright, insanely addictive – this re-imagining of the retro classic is an essential addition to anybody's PSN library.		
Payday: The Heist	213	88%
Pain	183	69%
Peggle	189	94%
Pinballistik	215	75%
PixelJunk Eden	169	67%
PixelJunk Monsters	163	94%
PixelJunk Shooter	187	93%
PixelJunk Shooter 2	204	90%
 If you like challenges, shooting, pixels and junk, then this combines all four of those and adds in several splashes of style as well.		
PixelJunk SideScroller	213	77%

game	issue	score
Piyotama	162	62%
Planet Minigolf	196	58%
Polar Panic	190	65%
Populous: The Beginning	46	70%
Prince Of Persia Classic	173	67%
Puddle	216	76%
Puzzle Chronicles	194	70%
Puzzle Dimension	208	81%
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	68%
Q*bert	58	53%
Rag Doll Kung Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	83%
Rampage: World Tour	29	77%
Ratchet & Clank: Quest For Booty	170	69%
Rayman	01	76%
Rayman 3 HD	217	77%
Renegade Ops	211	78%
Resident Evil 4 HD	210	93%
 One of the best games ever made comes to PSN. Unfortunately it also brings with it a rather high price tag.		
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	211	72%
Revenge Of The Wounded Dragons	191	60%
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	86%
Risk: Nations	202	80%
Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken	212	82%
Rocket Knight	194	74%
Rocketmen: Axis Of Evil	165	63%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 1	194	90%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 2	194	92%
Sega Rally Online Arcade	208	74%
Savage Moon	175	87%
Scott Pilgrim Vs The World	197	77%
Section 8	193	78%
Section 8: Prejudice	209	80%
Shank	197	86%
Shatter	183	91%
Sheep	171	78%
Shoot Many Robots	217	81%
Siren Blood Curse	170	62%
Skullgirls	218	88%
Smash Cars	184	50%
SOCOM Confrontation	178	55%
Soldner-X 2: Final Prototype	195	70%
Sonic 4: Episode One	199	82%
Sonic Adventure	198	63%
Sonic CD	214	82%
Spin Jam	174	32%
Snakeball	176	92%
Stacking	203	88%
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	57%
Street Fighter Alpha: Warrior's Dream	159	57%
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	209	92%
 The best version of one of the best fighting games ever released, or something. We don't know, mainly because Ryan isn't writing this.		
Street Skater 2	178	40%
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	78%
Super Rub-A-Dub	151	83%
Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars	177	65%
Super Stardust HD	155	74%
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	72%
Switchball	191	75%
Swords And Soldiers	199	88%
Syphon Filter	48	93%
Syphon Filter 3	170	80%
Tales Of Monkey Island	196	91%
Tank Battles	186	68%
Tekken HD	150	80%
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	87%
Tetris	202	84%
The Baconing	210	72%
The Last Guy	171	91%
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	49%
The Secret Of Monkey Island Special Edition	195	92%
 LucasArts' classic point-and-click adventure gets an HD makeover and will hopefully be the first of many classics heading to PSN.		
The Simpsons: Arcade Game	216	54%
The Walking Dead	219	89%
Theme Hospital	32	80%
Theme Park	174	80%
TMNT: Turtles in Time Re-shelled	186	57%
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six	54	34%
Top Darts	202	71%
Top Gun	198	53%
Topotai: Spinning Through The Worlds	183	61%
ToyHome	162	31%

PS3'S BEST GAMES

BLUR

86%, PLAY193



Imagine a world where there was a game sort of like *Mario Kart* on PS3, but it wasn't like, say, *Crash Team Racing* or any of those other PSone-era rip-offs that were fun but were also sort of a bit too obvious to pass muster.



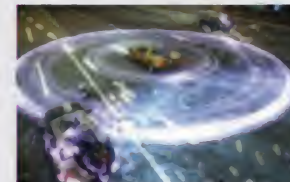
Imagine a world with a game of real cars and real locations, made by the company famous for making some absolutely brilliant racing games. Imagine all of that, put together into one big pile of super fun times. And you've got *Blur*.



It was *Mario Kart*, it was *Project Gotham Racing*, it was all of the silly fun brought out in a realistic-looking game. And it was actually really good fun, offering something different enough to its contemporary, *Split/Second*.



It was also a game somewhat ahead of its time, bringing in Twitter and Facebook integration well before many other games even bothered with these slightly irritating systems. It also predated *Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit's* Autolog by six months.



Sadly, *Blur* did bugger all at retail, tanking so hard that Activision decided to shutter Bizarre Creations. There died the aspirations of a developer that, bar the *Project Gotham* and *Geometry Wars* series, had often shot wide of the mark with some great games (see also: *The Club*).

PERIPHERAL CONCERNS



GIOTECK REAL TRIGGERS

We hear some people saying they don't like these little plastic button augmentations, but even though that's their opinion and they're entitled to it, they are wrong. Gioteck triggers are a necessity for anyone serious about using their pad for anything other than games where you don't use **L2** or **R2**. And that's not many games. So there.



JOYSTICK

If you're anything like us, you're awesome. Also you play a lot of fighting games. Fighting games work on pads, but they're picky and arsey and they annoy us and they hurt our poor, beleaguered thumbs and we hate them. But when you buy a joystick – a decent one for £50 or more – you end up with the true, beautiful experience.



USB PEN DRIVE

Is it a peripheral? Or is it an independent piece of hardware not specifically manufactured for PS3 but that can be used with the console to improve your experience? Yeah, it's that one. Your downloaded music, movies, pictures and whatever else needs to be moved about – grab a USB stick, whack your stuff on it, swap it between your machines, view/play it through your PS3. Simple.



KEYBOARD

This is one for if you've got a bit more money and space to spare and you don't mind if you buy something that you don't actually use much. Basically, it's pointless, but we're awkward like that. Still, if you do a lot of typing or web browsing or want to play *Unreal Tournament 3*, *Counter-Strike: Global Offensive* or whatever else then a keyboard and accompanying mouse is a good idea.

game	issue	score
Trash Panic	181	79%
Trials Of Topaq	159	50%
Trine	184	85%
Tumble	198	70%
Under Siege	207	71%
Uno	189	85%
Vagrant Story	189	82%
Vandal Hearts: Flames Of Judgment	192	87%
Wakeboarding HD	192	65%
Warhawk: Operation Fallen Star	171	80%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?	214	79%
WipEout	01	89%
WipEout HD	172	84%
Wolfenstein	181	70%
Worms	179	91%
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	87%
Worms Battle Islands	201	80%
Worms Crazy Golf	213	82%
Worms: Ultimate Mayhem	217	80%
X-Men Arcade	203	60%
Yars' Revenge	206	57%
Zack Zero	215	73%
Zombie Apocalypse: Never Die Alone	213	69%
Zuma	182	78%

PSP LISTING

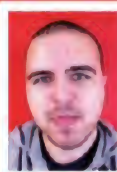


300: March To Glory	152	59%
Ace Combat X	147	72%
Ace Combat: Joint Assault	194	79%
After Burner: Black Falcon	152	82%
Ape Academy 2	145	52%
Ape Escape P	140	37%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	190	45%
Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines	187	77%
Astonishia Story	142	68%
Beaterator	186	72%
Blade Dancer: Lineage Of Light	145	45%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger Portable	194	84%
Blood Bowl	184	53%
Bombberman	150	83%
Boulder Dash: Rocks!	165	69%
Breath Of Fire III	138	82%
Brothers In Arms: D-Day	149	69%
Burnout Dominator	153	65%
Burnout Legends	134	94%
Buzz! Brain Bender	175	68%
Capcom Classics Collection Reloaded	147	80%
Capcom Classics Collection Remixed	141	72%
Cars	143	60%
Castlevania: The Dracula X Chronicles	163	78%
Championship Manager	137	65%
Championship Manager 2006	140	32%
Cid The Dummy	180	32%
Coded Arms	134	53%
Call Of Duty: Roads To Victory	153	69%
Colin McRae Rally 2005 Plus	134	84%
Crisis Core – Final Fantasy VII	167	87%
Crush	154	80%
Dante's Inferno	191	76%
Dead Or Alive: Paradise	192	56%
Disgaea: Afternoon Of Darkness	161	92%
Dissidia: Final Fantasy	184	60%
Dissidia 012 Final Fantasy	203	79%
Disgaea 2: Dark Hero Days	190	87%
Dragon Ball Z: Shin Budokai 2	154	50%
Driver 76	154	68%
Dungeons & Dragons: Tactics	159	55%
Dungeon Siege: Throne Of Agony	148	85%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	179	69%
EA Replay	147	74%
echochrome	169	85%
echoshift	191	73%
Everybody's Golf 2	167	86%
Everybody's Tennis	195	88%
Every Extend Extra	145	84%
Exit	138	65%
EyePet	199	77%
F1 2009	187	66%
Fate/Extra	219	60%
Field Commander	145	83%
FIFA 06	136	43%
FIFA 07	147	81%
FIFA 11	198	69%
FIFA World Cup 2010	193	65%
Fired Up	134	60%
Final Fantasy	164	63%

*denotes import review

game	issue	score
Final Fantasy IV: The Complete Collection	204	80%
Final Fantasy Tactics	159	86%
FlatOut: Head On	164	79%
Football Manager 2007	147	62%
Football Manager Handheld 2008	161	49%
Football Manager Handheld 2010	187	60%
Formula One 06	143	78%
Frantix	136	36%
Gangs Of London	144	65%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	42%
Ghost Recon Predator	200	60%
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	188	55%
Ghostbusters: Sanctum Of Slime	204	51%
Gitaroo Man Lives!	144	79%
Gladiator Begins	206	52%
Go! Sudoku	137	45%
Gods Eater Burst	202	88%
God Of War: Chains Of Olympus	165	84%
God Of War: Ghost Of Sparta	199	79%
Gradius Collection	144	80%
Gran Turismo	184	85%
Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars	185	95%
GTA: Liberty City Stories	135	95%
GTA: Vice City Stories	147	96%
Half-Minute Hero	191	87%
Hard Corps: Uprising	204	78%
Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire	136	69%
Hellboy: Science Of Evil	170	60%
Holy Invasion Of Privacy, Badman! What Did I Do To Deserve This?	186	73%
Hot Pixel	155	73%
Indiana Jones And The Staff Of Kings	181	60%
Infected	141	68%
Innocent Life: A Futuristic Harvest Moon	154	70%
International Athletics	170	40%
Invizimals	187	71%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
Juiced: Eliminator	141	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	160	80%
Kao Challengers	137	60%
Killzone: Liberation	146	83%
Kingdom Hearts: Birth By Sleep	196	88%
Lemmings	138	63%
LittleBigPlanet	186	90%
LocoRoco	143	94%
LocoRoco 2	173	82%
LocoRoco Midnight Carnival	186	81%
Lord Of Arcana	202	65%
Lumines II	137	74%
Madden NFL 06	137	74%
Marvel Trading Cards	155	38%
Me And My Katamari	138	86%
Medal Of Honor Heroes	147	72%
Medieval Resurrection	134	53%
Mercury Meltdown	145	66%
Metal Slug Anthology	150	91%
Metal Gear Acid 2	138	92%
Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker	193	92%
Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops	150	91%
Miami Vice	144	82%
Micro Machines V4	142	71%
Might & Magic: Clash Of Heroes	205	84%
ModNation Racers	193	70%
Monster Hunter Freedom	140	81%
Monster Hunter Freedom 2	157	59%
Monster Hunter Freedom Unite	181	77%
Moon Diver	205	46%
MotoGP	146	75%
Motorstorm: Arctic Edge	184	72%
Mytran Wars	179	85%
Namco Museum Battle Collection	136	68%
Naruto Shippuden Legends	185	46%
Naruto Ultimate Ninja Heroes 2	169	46%
NBA Ballers: Rebound	139	61%
Need For Speed Undercover	175	57%
No Heroes Allowed	199	69%
OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	139	93%
PaRappa The Rapper	155	88%
Patapon	163	86%
Patapon 2	177	87%
Patapon 3	205	81%
Patchwork Heroes	192	85%
Persona 2: Innocent Sin	214	65%
Pirates Of The Caribbean	143	52%
PixelJunk Monster Deluxe	185	86%
Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	163	77%
Pocket Racers	144	49%
PoPoLoCroIs	142	71%
Power Stone Collection	145	88%
PQ – Practical Intelligence Quotient	141	52%

game	issue	score
Prince Of Persia Revelations	138	69%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	194	52%
Prinny: Can I Really Be The Hero?	181	80%
PSN Collection: Power Pack	173	70%
PSN Collection: Puzzle Pack	173	54%
Pursuit Force	134	83%
Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice	159	76%
Puzzle Chronicles	190	61%
Puzzle Quest	153	66%
R-Type Tactics	170	74%
Rainbow Six Vegas	156	78%
Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters	154	78%
Red Faction: Battlegrounds	205	78%
Rengoku 2	144	72%
Resistance: Retribution	177	76%
Ridge Racer 2	145	78%
Ridge Racer	132	91%
Rock Band Unplugged	181	92%
Rocky Balboa	150	68%
Secret Agent Clank	169	79%
Sega Mega Drive Collection	177	79%
Sega Rally	158	90%
Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3 Portable	206	78%
Shinobido: Tales Of The Ninja	150	60%
Silent Hill Origins	160	87%
Silent Hill: Shattered Memories	190	52%
Slam Bolt Scrappers	204	73%
Smash Court Tennis	154	58%
SOCOM Fire Team 2	154	70%
SOCOM: Fireteam Bravo 3	190	71%
SOCOM: Tactical Strike	160	85%
SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo	140	69%
Sonic Rivals	147	70%
Sonic Rivals 2	162	35%
SoulCalibur: Broken Destiny	183	92%
Spider-Man 3	162	32%
Spinout	149	81%
Splinter Cell: Essentials	139	71%
Split/Second: Velocity	200	71%
SSX On Tour	138	76%
Star Ocean: Second Evolution	178	78%
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	148	59%
Star Wars Battlefront II	137	74%
Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron	187	65%
Star Wars: Lethal Alliance	148	69%
Star Wars: Renegade Squadron	160	78%
Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max	138	70%
Street Riders	140	29%
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	142	54%
Swarm	204	78%
Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	140	90%
Tekken 6	187	90%
Tekken: Dark Resurrection	143	92%
Tactics Ogre: Let Us Cling Together	202	81%
Tenchu: Shadow Assassins	179	71%
Tenchu: Time Of The Assassins	146	51%
The 3rd Birthday	203	80%
The Con	153	59%
The Cube	153	64%
The Eye Of Judgment: Legends	191	57%
The Godfather Mob Wars	136	66%
The Legend Of Heroes: Trails In The Sky	214	75%
The Lord Of The Rings: Tactics	136	66%
The Sims 2	137	71%
TNA Impact! Cross The Line	189	58%
TOCA 3	152	70%
Tokobot	140	79%
Tomb Raider: Anniversary	156	81%
Tomb Raider: Legend	140	72%
Twisted Metal Head-On	134	54%
UFC Undisputed 2010	197	80%
Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins	145	88%
Undead Knights	189	46%
Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code	140	59%
Valhalla Knights	158	49%
Valkyria Chronicles 2	196	87%
Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth	153	78%
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	140	82%
Virtua Tennis 3	152	88%
Warhammer 40,000: Squad Command	161	70%
What Did I Do To Deserve This My Lord!? 2	192	78%
WipEout Pulse	159	86%
WipEout Pure	138	91%
World Of Pool	156	43%
World Tour Poker	141	67%
World Tour Soccer 2	142	40%
Worms: Open Warfare 2	157	80%
WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2006	137	84%
WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2007	147	80%
World Rally Championship	134	67%



RYAN KING

WHAT (HAVE THEY BEEN PLAYING?):

BATMAN: ARKHAM CITY

WHY (WAS IT CHOSEN?):

Getting Riddler Trophies

HAVE YOU GONE back to *Batman* recently? Go back to it. See what happens. Here's what happened when I went back to it – I started back in *Arkham City* on top of a flat roof, ran towards the edge, forgot the controls and fell into the water below.

There are a few things I could blame for this. I was playing *Arkham City* while eating a Gregg's sausage roll, so the pad was slipping and sliding everywhere. I also had a mild hangover, so my brain was running even lower than its usual dim half-power setting. It was also because I had been smashing through *Uncharted 3* and they occupy the same bit of muscle memory with conflicting controls. That's it. Not me being rubbish. Honest.

Point is, *Batman* is complicated. Really complicated. Not complicated in a here's-a-Valentine's-card-with-a-dead-rose-inside way but the controls. There are combos, shortcuts, gadgets, context-sensitive controls... It's a lot to remember. You might think, 'Oh, Play, you're so stupid. It's easy!' Try going back to *Batman*, while eating a sausage roll, while hung over, after completing *Uncharted 3* on Crushing. Go on. GO ON. Yeah. Exactly.



PLAYING THE PLAYLIST

What has the Play team been indulging in this month?



Take that, THQ!



It's all uDraw's fault, isn't it?



STEVE BURNS

WHAT (HAVE THEY BEEN PLAYING?):

UFC UNDISPUTED 3

WHY (WAS IT CHOSEN?):

Sadness

WITH THE NEWS that THQ had sold off the UFC licence, I decided to go back to the publisher's last attempt at digitising the biggest name in MMA: *UFC Undisputed 3*. It was with a heavy heart that I fired up the game, knowing that this was probably THQ's last go at an MMA title. There isn't room for two on the market, as EA found out before – and given the sales of *Undisputed 3*, there's barely room for one.

It's a shame, because *Undisputed* is good. Really good. Fist-pump-in-the-air-when-you-knock-someone's-teeth-out good. The licence is well used, the career mode is engaging, and this is as tense as any game of PES when two players are involved.

And then I remembered that EA was getting the licence, and that its engine was actually loads better, and that I shouldn't feel bad at all. Because now the best licence is going to be paired with the best gameplay, and it'll have the money behind it to really push things forward. And then I took the disc out of the machine and snapped it in two, discarding it like THQ had done. The king is dead. Long live the king.

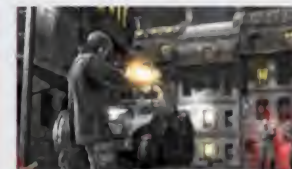
PLAY'S BEST GAMES IF YOU LIKE...



Tactile disembowelling

PLAY: MORTAL KOMBAT (VITA)

We're all for murdering people after besting them in a one-on-one bout, but it's made all the better by really getting in there and feeling the guts and assorted bits you're tearing up. Anyway, on an unrelated note, we like *Mortal Kombat* Vita's touch-screen Fatalities.



Creative swearing

PLAY: THE SABOTEUR

It's a bit of a poor game and it saw Pandemic shut down, basically, but there's no denying the creative swearing on show throughout this adventure of an Irish bloke killing Nazis. "F**k you arseways" indeed. Childish? Sure. Brilliant? Definitely.



Overreacting to inane comments

PLAY: L.A. NOIRE

Hey, look, we're like a meme from the other year! But shut up, because we remembered Cole Phelps and his ridiculous overreactions to teenage girls and their knack for getting a bit scared when a man shouts at them for not getting scared. And we laughed.



Putting monkeys in nets

PLAY: APE ESCAPE

Ape Escape is still a surprising amount of fun, but the true joy comes in the boundless enthusiasm we have for putting simians in nets. It's the sort of thing we genuinely wish we could do in real life.



Pretty much anything

PLAY: LITTLEBIGPLANET 2

We're on a bit of a LBP2 trip right now, and we're not entirely sure why. Probably because it's brilliant. Anyway, seeing as you can make near anything in it, it's great for anyone who likes anything. Success!



BINARY DOMAIN



WHAT WE SAID

PLAY 216
"Binary Domain
is a lad's holiday
in futuristic
suits. At least the writing
is funny, tempered with
enough self-awareness
that it knows how
ridiculous everything is.
"It's not so much a bad
game, perhaps just a little
more uninspired than we'd
expected from the minds
of the Yakuza series."

70%
72
out of 100

metacritic

WHAT OTHERS SAID

DID BINARY DOMAIN TICKLE YOUR FANCY? OR WERE ITS BLAND-O-FEATURES OFF-PUTTING? HAVE YOU IGNORED IT EVEN THOUGH IT'S DIRT CHEAP ON PSN?

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RICHARD GYDE Hmm, I have other things to play, but my store has it at 60% off...

STUART THE-KINSLAYER JOHNSON Only played the demo, and I like it so going to get it.

JOHN STEWART *Binary Domain's* problem was it was too generic. It didn't offer anything new and it had all been done before and better.

KEVIN WILLIAM SMITH IT'S TOO DAMN HOT TO PLAY *BINARY DOMAIN*!

BRANDON HARLIM Didn't buy it... because I read your expert review :P

JOHN MURRAY I enjoyed it! Bought it on release. It doesn't re-invent the wheel or anything, but it's a good solid blast with just enough variety to keep me from getting bored.

REECE WARD I never heard of it until now. I might give it a look.

BEN CHILD Honestly it looks a bit crap to me, but I might try the demo at some point. On the 32nd of June.

BRIAN GIBSON It was okay, nothing special. An interesting twist on the *I, Robot* idea.

twitter
 twitter.com/PlayMag_UK

NEORG TREBOR @D3J08 Girlfriend downloaded it. I watched her shoot bots but wasn't tempted to join in.

CRAIG STEPHEN LEVIN @ENSLAVER666 Demo was okay but I would only pay a fiver.

BARRY DAVIS @MYNAMEISBARRY Really enjoyed the satisfying sound of getting a headshot. Not much love for the voice commands and Horde mode, though, Big Bo!

ADAM ANOUER @ADAM_ANOUER It's really hard to want to get into anything that starts with the word 'Binary'.

MOHAMMAD AL OTAIBY @FENIXII *BD* was somewhere in between. It had an interesting story, but the linearity killed it. It's better than *Vanquish* anyway.

DANIEL HORKAN @LIGHTSAMUS Genuinely surprised me. I was ready to write it off as 'just another third-person shooter', but it's actually really enjoyable.

MIKE ADEBAJO @LIKEMIKE Fun gunplay, cheesy yet awesome story and characters. Lack of marketing from Sega meant nobody knew about it or cared.



Post-Mortem

It was fighting an uphill battle from the beginning, let's be honest. All the complaints in the world about games all looking the same these days – grey locales, muscle-bound idiot characters and cover-based combat – applied, and applied with gusto. On first impressions, *Binary Domain* would put the more cynical of us (hello!) into a coma. There's no science behind that, but it is fact. So it's no surprise that *BD* has done... not so well. And it's not a surprise that many have derided it openly for being so derivative.

But there's another batch of people, commonly referred to as 'those who actually played it', who stick to the belief that *Binary Domain* is actually worth a bit of your time. It's not great – nobody's claiming that – but the sub-£20 price point it turned up at on PSN makes it something we can recommend more readily than when it was stuck at an unrealistic £50. The creativity shows through the game's quirks and its personality – not through what it looks like or, for the most part, how it plays. As such, it's the sort of game that needs to be given a chance before it's written off. And with the price being asked, it seems Sega actually understands that.

PLAY

The Voice Of PlayStation
Gaming For Over A Decade

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"Batman's bulge was considered outrageous
by DC and Warner Bros in some early iterations"

WHY GTA KILLER THIS IS VEGAS WAS CANNED

"She was red-faced, yelling at us to 'ship the game' and
'I don't care about quality'. Wow, I thought. We're done"

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO EIGHT DAYS?

"It was close to the 'Hollywood action movie'
type of gameplay seen in many games today"

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PLAY



No Disc. No Problem

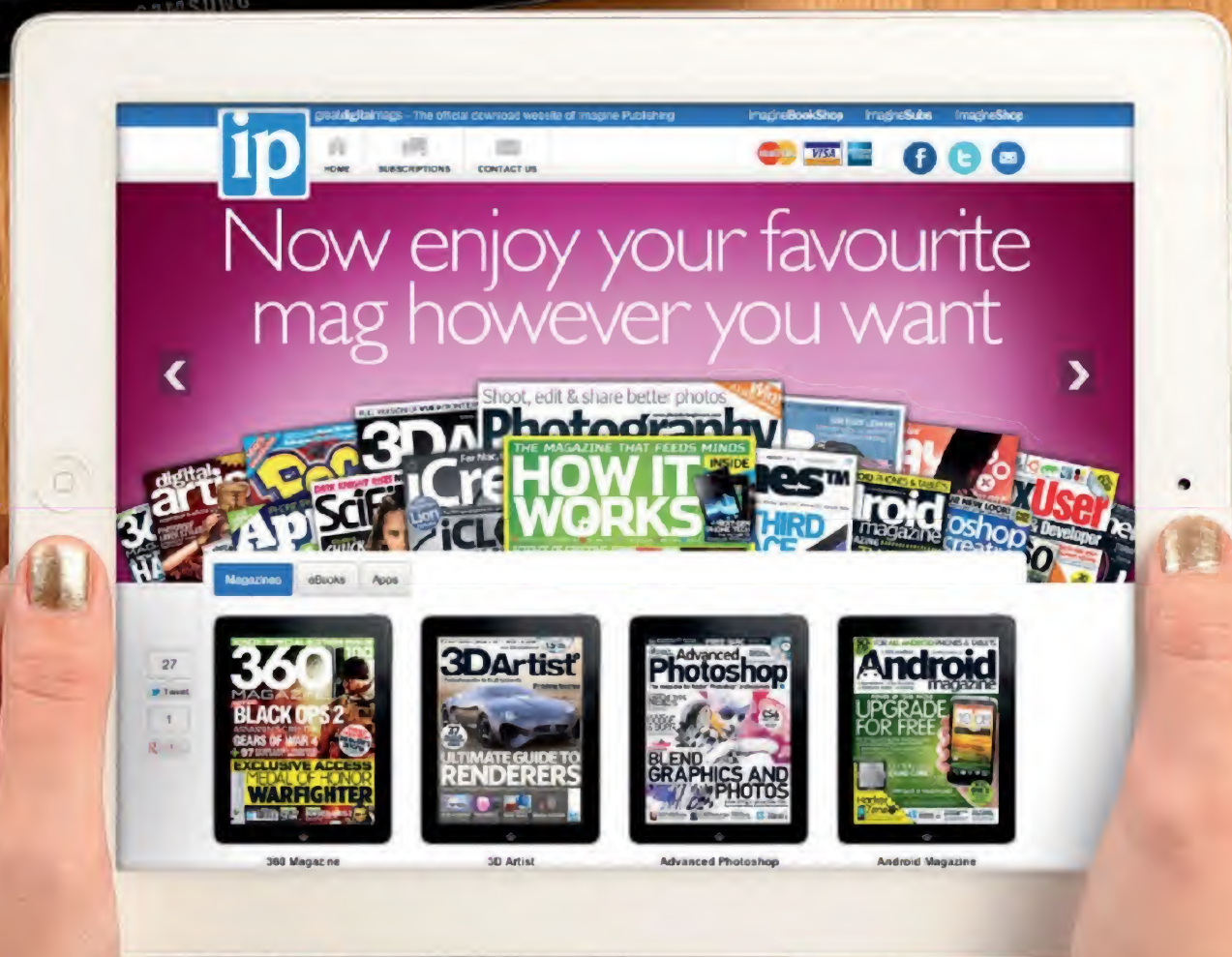
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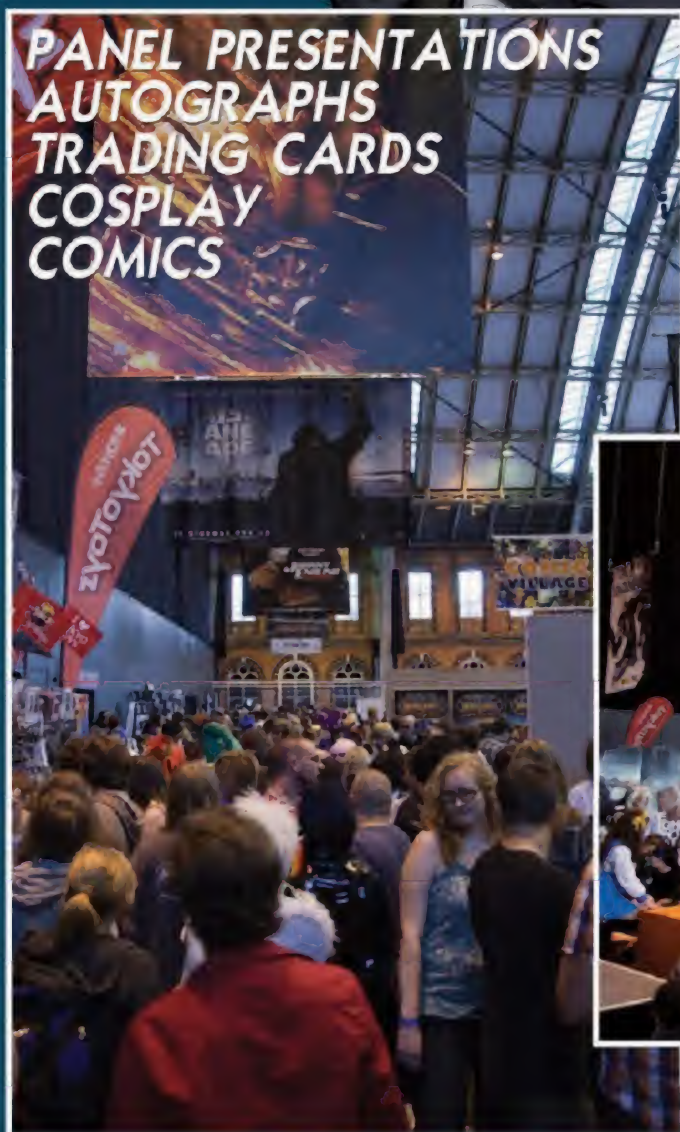
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DEATH LIVES

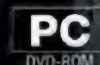
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SEARCH: DARKSIDERS



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*Argul's Tomb DLC available for download post release of Darksiders II, exact date TBC.